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REPORT

OF

THE COMMITTEE

APPOINTED ON THE

TWENTY-THIRD OF SEPTEMBER LAST

TO INQUIRE

INTO THE CAUSES AND PARTICULARS

OF THE

INVASION OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON,

BY

THE BRITISH FORCES

IN

THE MONTH OF AUGUST, 1814.

NOVEMBER 29, 1814.

Read, and committed to a committee of the whole house on
Monday, the 19th of December next.

WASHINGTON:

A. AND G. WAY, PRINTERS.

.....
1814.

RESOLUTION.

*In the House of Representatives of the United
States, 23d of September, 1814.*

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to inquire into the causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against this metropolis, and the neighboring town of Alexandria; and into the manner in which the public buildings and property were destroyed, and the amount thereof, and that they have power to send for persons and papers.

Mr. Johnson, of Kentucky, Mr. Lowndes, Mr. Stockton, Mr. Miller, Mr. Goldsborough, Mr. Barbour and Mr. Pickens, were appointed the said committee.

Attest,

PATRICK MAGRUDER, *Clk.*

ing of the cabinet on the 7th, and the estimates of land and naval forces, had no particular relation to the defence of any part of military district No. 5; but for measures generally, and particularly in regard to the campaign on our territorial frontiers in the north and north-west. Nor does it appear that this city had excited more than ordinary attention at this time.

Proceedings of the cabinet the 1st of July.

But soon after, certain intelligence being received of the complete success of the allies in the subjugation of France, the president believed that the enemy had the inclination and the power to increase his military and naval forces against the United States; and in that event he believed that a variety of considerations would present this city as one of the prominent objects of attack. On the 26th of June, despatches were received from Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard, confirming the views of the president, which induced him to convene the heads of departments on the first of July; at which time he presented a plan of a force immediately to be called into the field, and an additional force to be kept in readiness to march without delay in case of necessity. It seemed to be his object that some position should be taken between the Eastern-branch and Patuxent, with two or three thousand men, and that an additional force of ten or twelve thousand militia and volunteers should be held in readiness in the neighboring states, including the militia of the district of Columbia, and that convenient depots of arms and military equipments should be established. The measures suggested were approved by the heads of departments; or, in other words, it does not appear that any dissent was expressed.

Correspondence of the secretary of war and general Winder.

The next day, July the 2d, by a general order of the war department, the 10th military district was

created, to embrace the state of Maryland, the district of Columbia, and that part of Virginia lying between the Rappahannoc and Potomac, under the command of brigadier general Winder, who being then in Baltimore was advised of the fact by a letter from the secretary of war of the same date. On the 4th of July, a requisition was made on certain states for a corps of 93,500 men, designating the quota of each, with a request to the executive of each state to detach and hold in readiness for immediate service their respective detachments, recommending the expediency of fixing the places of rendezvous with a due regard to points the importance or exposure of which would most likely attract the views of the enemy. Of that requisition, 2000 effectives from the quota of Virginia; 5000 from that of Pennsylvania; 6000, the whole quota of Maryland, and 2000, the estimated number of the militia of the district of Columbia, were put at the disposition of the commanding general, as hereafter appears, making the aggregate number of 15,000, exclusive of the regular troops, viz: the 36th regiment, one battalion of the 38th, two troops of dragoons, two companies of the 10th infantry, one company of the 12th, and two companies of sea fencibles, supposed to amount to 1000 men, besides the artilleryists composing the garrisons of forts M'Henry and Washington.

On the 9th of July, general Winder, in a letter to the secretary of war, on the subject of the duties which devolved upon him as commander of the 10th military district, a previous conversation is alluded to as having taken place between them, in consequence of the request of the secretary in his letter of the 2d of July. General Winder appears to have understood the intention of the secretary of war to be, that the militia force proposed for the 10th military district should be drafted and designated, but that no part of it should be called into the field until the hostile squadron in the Chesapeake should be reinforced

to such an extent as to render it probable that a serious attack was contemplated; states the difficulty of collecting a force in an emergency, sufficient to retard the advance of the enemy; and suggests the expediency of calling out 4000 of the militia, with a view to station them in equal proportions between South river and Washington, and in the vicinity of Baltimore.

On the 12th of July the secretary of war, in a letter to general Winder, encloses a circular addressed to the governors of certain states, requiring a body of militia to be organized, equipped and held in readiness for future service, and authorizes him, in case of actual or menaced invasion of the district under his command, to call for a part or the whole of the quota assigned to the state of Maryland; and in another of the 17th July, the secretary authorizes general Winder to draw from Virginia, 2,000 men; from Pennsylvania, 5,000 men; and informs him that the whole of the militia of the district of Columbia, amounting to about 2,000, was in a disposable state and subject to his order; making, together with the six thousand from Maryland, the estimate of 15,000 militia. On the 15th of July the secretary of war advised general Winder, that general Porter had communicated the fact of the arrival of the van of Cochrane's fleet at Lynhaven bay, and that the agent at Point Look-out had represented that 2 seventy-fours, 2 frigates, an armed sloop and brig ascended the bay at half past 5, post meridian, on the 14th: that he considered it proper to call into service the brigade of militia which had been for some time held in readiness at Baltimore, and not knowing whether general Winder was at Baltimore or Annapolis, he had instructed the major-general, under whose orders they were organized, to call them out.

General Winder, in a letter of the 16th of July to the secretary of war, among other things, expresses his embarrassment in relation to the situation of An-

napolis, and gives it as his opinion that a large force and many additional works would be necessary to defend it against a serious attack by land and water; states its importance to the enemy, and the ease with which it might be maintained by them with the command by water, and an entrenchment of 7 or 800 yards protected by batteries; represents fort Madison as exposed, and unhealthy in the months of August and September, provided with two 50 lb. columbiads, 2 twenty-fours, 2 eighteens, 1 twelve and 1 tom, which might be turned with success against fort Severn; that these guns should be removed and arrangements made to blow up the fort; and represents the importance of defending the town if the means could be obtained; states the governor of Maryland and council had taken the necessary steps to comply immediately with the requisition of the general government. On the 17th July, a letter from general Winder to the secretary of war states, that information, that he deemed credible, was received that the enemy was ascending the river in considerable force; that he had ordered the detachment of regulars to Nottingham, had sent out the alarm to assemble a militia force, and suggests the propriety of sending to that place the marine corps and all the militia that could be procured from the district of Columbia. The secretary on the same day acknowledges the receipt of the above letter, and states that the marine corps was not under his command; but had sent the request to the president, and, as the authority to call the militia was vested in the commanding general, he had transmitted his requisition upon the district to general Van Ness; he also reminds him that the two regiments near Baltimore had been called into actual service, and expresses the wish of the president that not less than two nor more than 3,000 of the drafts, under the requisition of the fourth of July, should be embodied and encamped at some middle point between Baltimore and this city.

From the letter of general Winder, of the 20th of July, it appears that the enemy proceeded up the Patuxent to Hunting creek, landed and committed some depredations in Calvert county, and returned down the river. Three companies of city volunteers had marched from this district, in obedience to the call of general Winder, which he had halted at the Wood yard, and the detachments of the 36th and 38th regiments at Upper Marlboro, while he proceeded to Annapolis, to arrange with the governor the calling out the Maryland militia; which he states will be immediately attended to by the governor. He states that he had called for the largest number directed by the president, viz. 3000, expecting thereby to get 2000, the lowest number; that he forbore to dismantle fort Madison, as it might alarm the people, and produce disagreeable sensations: preferring rather to risque it in case of attack. On the 23d of July, general Winder informs the secretary of war that the governor of Maryland had issued his order for calling out 3000 of the drafts under the requisition of the 4th of July, and had appointed Bladensburg as the place of rendezvous according to his suggestion. In another letter of the same date, general Winder informs the secretary of war, that he had deemed it expedient to direct captain Davidson, with the city volunteers, to return to the city of Washington, from the two-fold consideration that the facility with which they could turn out and proceed to any point, rendered them nearly as effective as if kept in the field, and the importance to them individually of attending to their private concerns. That the rifles used by captain Doughty's company were very defective, and that captain Burch's artillery were without swords. He recommends that the camp equipage should be left in charge of the company officers to facilitate their march. On the 25th of July, general Winder, in a letter to the secretary of war, dated at Warburton, near fort Washington, represents that fort in several respects

to be incomplete in its preparation for defence; encloses a representation of lieutenant Edwards on the subject; makes a requisition of ammunition, and requests that colonel Wadsworth may cause the platform to be enlarged so as to make the battery more effectual. The report of lieutenant Edwards speaks of the necessity of mounting heavy artillery in the Block house; states that the 18 lb. columbiads were not mounted, and that the garrison wanted means to mount them, being destitute of gin and tackle; represents the width of the platform, which ought to be 24 feet, to be only 14, and that the heavy guns at their first discharge would recoil to the hurtoirs, and on being heated would run over it; that five excellent long 18's were mounted on the water battery, which would be very useful in case of attack; but there was not a single pound of ammunition for them, and that some of the gun carriages in the fort were quite out of order.

This statement of lieutenant Edwards was referred upon its receipt to colonel Wadsworth, with orders to supply what was wanting at the fort, of which the secretary advised general Winder, bearing date 28th July; and col. Wadsworth, in a representation about the same date, states, that two hands had been ordered from Greenleaf's point on the Monday previous, to execute the necessary repairs of the gun-carriages; that the platform as well as the parapet was too narrow, but not so narrow as lieutenant Edwards had stated, for it was directed to be made 20 or 22 feet wide; and that the disadvantage of too narrow a platform could be obviated with no great difficulty, by means of an elastic handspike introduced between the spokes of the wheels, which would prevent them from turning, and thus check the recoil of the piece. Further states, that two hundred rounds of shot and cartridges for the eighteen's, could be sent down if ordered; that he had long since directed some grape shot to be prepared for the 18 lb. columbiads; that a

tackle and fall to mount the guns in the block house should be prepared ; that captain Marsteller had just informed him, that a good tackle and fall were at the fort when he left it, and that the platform was upwards of 20 feet wide. General Winder, in a letter of the 26th July, from Piscataway, advises the secretary of war, that the enemy had descended both the Potomac and Patuxent rivers ; that he expected him up the bay, and should not be surprised to find Annapolis his object, which he feared would fall before 500 men ; and that he should return to Marlborough as soon as he could ascertain the movements of the enemy. On the 27th of July, general Winder, in two letters to the secretary of war from Piscataway, states the force under general Stewart at 800 ; colonel Beall's regiment at Port Tobacco from 300 to 350 infantry, and 40 dragoons ; colonel Bowen's regiment at Nottingham at 300, and the detachment of regulars under command of lieutenant-colonel Scott, was also at Nottingham ; and from general Winder's letter to the secretary of war of the 1st of August, from Port Tobacco, it appears, that he had the detachment under lieutenant-colonel Scott, at Piscataway.

Correspondence of general Winder, with the governor of Pennsylvania.

In relation to the quota of Pennsylvania under the requisition of the 4th of July, and more especially as it regards the 5000 men subject to the call of general Winder, and assigned to his command, it appears that general Winder wrote to the governor of Pennsylvania, on the 6th of August, advising him that the secretary of war had destined a part of that quota to act under his command, in defending the country embraced in the 10th military district, and requesting that he might be informed of the place or places of rendezvous which would be fixed for such troops, and recommending places most contiguous to the cities of

Washington and Baltimore. On the 8th of August, general Winder writes again to the governor of Pennsylvania, stating, that since his first communication he had read a letter from the secretary of war, dated the 17th of July, which had not reached him at an earlier period in consequence of his having been in constant motion since that time; which informed him that of the quota of militia of Pennsylvania under the requisition of the 4th of July, 5000 were destined for the 10th military district, subject to his call as commanding officer, and requested that as great a proportion of the detachment as possible should be riflemen.

On the 11th of August, secretary Boileau, under the direction of the governor of Pennsylvania, in answer to general Winder, states, that in consequence of the deranged state of the militia system, great difficulties occurred to the executive in relation to the quota required to be held in readiness for the service of the United States. The only effort that could be made towards a compliance with the requisition, was to have ordered a designation for the service of the requisite troops, under the militia law of 1807, and before the expiration of that law; which order had been issued by the governor, and was in a course of execution; that the militia law of 1807 expired on the 1st of August, and that all commissions under it became void, except of such officers as might be in service on that day; and that, by an oversight in the legislature, no complete organization of the militia could be legally made in Pennsylvania, until the 4th Monday in October, when a classification was to take place.

On the 17th of August, general Winder makes a requisition on the governor of Pennsylvania, for one regiment, to march forthwith to the city of Washington; and on the day following, in consequence of large reinforcements of the enemy in the mouth of the Patuxent, he calls for the whole 5000 Pennsylvania

militia, by virtue of his previous authority. The 5000 were ordered out, to rendezvous at York, in Pennsylvania, on the 5th of September; of course, not in time to give any aid on the occasion for which they were called, nor was general Winder's letter of the 18th received by the governor of Pennsylvania until the evening of the 23d.

Correspondence of the secretary of war and general Winder.

On the 13th of August, general Winder, in a letter to the secretary of war, states, that in consequence of the acceptance of the 2d regiment drafted from general Smith's division, under the requisition of April, for part of the requisition of the 4th of July, the impracticability, besides impropriety, of calling any portion of the drafted militia from the eastern shore of Maryland, and the necessity of leaving all the men immediately upon the bay, and low down on the rivers of the western shore, for local defence; the remaining portion of the Maryland drafts to be assembled at Bladensburg, instead of being 3000 would not much exceed as many hundred; yet he would require the governor to order out all the drafts that could possibly be spared from the 3 lower brigades on the western shore; but as the whole number drafted on the western shore, exclusive of the brigade drawn from general Smith's division, did not amount to 1500 men, he did not expect more than 1000 under the second order of the government, that of the 4th of July. The most immediate and convenient resource to supply this deficiency, was to take the militia drawn out under the state authority and assembled at Annapolis, to the amount of 1000, into the service of the United States, and to call on Pennsylvania for one regiment, which would make his militia between 2000 and 3000 men, besides the 2 regiments from general Smith's division.

In answer to this letter, the secretary of war, in a letter of the 16th of August, authorizes general Winder to take into the service of the U. States, the Maryland militia then at Annapolis, or elsewhere, that had been called out under the state authority, as part of the quota required by the order of the 4th of July.

Correspondence of the secretary of war with the governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

On the 27th of July the governor of Maryland states, in a letter to the secretary of war, that in conformity to the request of the president of the United States, communicated in the requisition of the 4th, a detachment of 5,500 infantry and 600 artillery was directed to be organized and held in readiness to move at the shortest notice; and in order to comply with the requisition of general Winder, for calling into the field 3,000 drafts of the Maryland militia, by direction of the president, the whole of the drafts from the western shore, about 3,500 infantry, had been ordered to embody. He speaks of the exposed situation of the western shore, bordering upon the bay, and presumes that the drafts from that section of the country would not be drawn away, and expects Baltimore will be unwilling to have any force withdrawn from that place, by which any aid might be expected. These considerations had induced the order for the 3,500 men; this force was to be embodied and moved on the shortest route to Bladensburg; that the artillery of the state was about 900 men, two thirds in Baltimore; it would create uneasiness to take from that place 400, the proportion, and he had suspended that order until general Smith should have some communication with the secretary of war. In a letter of the 20th July, general Winder made the requisition on the governor of Maryland for the 3000 militia, urging the necessity of having them assembled and in service with the least possible delay; and on the 5th of Au-

gust the governor of Maryland informed gen. Win-der, by letter, that his demand for 3,000 drafts could not be complied with without the brigade in service at Baltimore, from general Smith's division; that the drafts from one brigade alone were under marching orders, the orders for the march of those lying on the Chesapeake and Potomac having been suspended.

On the 14th of July Mr. Boilieu, secretary of state for Pennsylvania, acknowledges the receipt of the communication from the war department, containing the requisition of the 14th of July, for 14,000 Pennsylvania militia, which was forwarded by express to the governor, who was absent at Selim's Grove, with assurances that the governor would execute with promptness the requisition of the general government. On the 25th the governor of Pennsylvania directs the secretary Boilieu to inform the secretary of war, that general orders had been issued in compliance with the requisition of the 4th of July; explains, as before, the difficulties resulting from the militia laws of Pennsylvania, and relies on the patriotism and voluntary services of the people.

On the 14th of July the deputy adjutant-general of Virginia, acknowledged the receipt of the communication from the war department, containing the requisition of the 4th, and enclosed to the secretary of war the general orders issued by the governor of Virginia on the 22d of June, placing in readiness a provisional force of 15,000 men and upwards to repel sudden invasions, and for the purpose of defence, and the points of rendezvous designated, but not organized upon the military establishment of the United States, nor for a longer term than three months, which, with other considerations, prevented the acceptance of any part of those state troops as a compliance with the requisition of the general government. The secretary of war was apprized in this letter also, that the whole of the Virginia troops, then held in readiness, would be furnished with arms and ammunition by the state.

of Virginia; and on the 18th the secretary of war informs the governor of Virginia that 2,000 of the requisition upon the Virginia militia would be placed at the disposition of general Winder, as commander of the 10th military district.

Having presented a condensed view of the measures of the cabinet; the correspondence between the commanding officer and the war department, the governors of Pennsylvania and Maryland and the commanding general; the correspondence with the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia and the secretary of war, in regard to the requisition of the 4th of July, it will now be proper to present some facts connected with the movements and arrangements of the commanding general up to the revocation of his command.

Towards the close of the month of June, the secretary of war gave to general Winder the first intimation that it was in contemplation to constitute a new military district, embracing the country now composing the 10th military district, and that the president intended to invest him with its command. On the 4th or 5th of July, he received notice of his appointment to the 10th military district, and the order creating it; proceeded to Washington and called on the secretary of war, who enumerated the regular force as before supposed to amount to 1000 or 1200; the residue of his command to be composed of militia to be drafted, and was shewn the circular to certain states, making the requisition of the 4th. He then returned to Baltimore, and after writing the letter of the 9th, proceeded to Annapolis to examine it and to explore the 10th military district generally. The letter of the 12th from the secretary of war, was not received until he went to Annapolis, to Upper Marlborough, and back to Annapolis. On the 17th, at Nottingham, received intelligence that the enemy was proceeding up the Patuxent; wrote to the secretary of war, and to general West, advising him to call out the militia of the county. The detachment of the

36th and 38th regiments was ordered from South river to Nottingham, and three companies of city militia were despatched to him promptly. On the 25th visited fort Washington; and on the 1st of August fixed his permanent head-quarters at the city of Washington; viewed and inspected the district militia. The people of St. Mary's and Charles had become importunate for aid and protection, and in obedience to the wish of the president, the 36th and 38th were ordered down to unite with general Stewart; but the enemy having retired this detachment was encamped at Piscataway. He understood by letters from general Smith of Baltimore, and the governor of Maryland, that Stansbury's brigade, upon application of general Smith, had been accepted by the secretary of war, as part of the quota of Maryland militia, under requisition of the 4th of July. On the morning of the 18th of August, *Thursday*, intelligence was received from the observatory at *Point Look-out*, that on the morning of the 17th, the enemy's fleet off that place had been reinforced by a formidable squadron of ships and vessels of various sizes. The commanding general immediately made requisitions on the governors of Pennsylvania and Maryland, various officers of militia, and the militia of the district of Columbia, were ordered out en masse.

On the 19th general Winder, in a letter to the secretary of war, submitted several propositions to the president:—1st. Would it be expedient, under the direction of the navy department, to have vessels ready to be sunk in the Potomac, at fort Washington or other points, at a moment's warning, to obstruct the navigation?—2d. Would it not be proper to put all the boats, which can be propelled by oars, that are at the city of Washington, under the controul of the navy at fort Washington, to transport troops as events may require?—3d. Would it not be convenient to put the marine corps into service? at all events, to cause them to be in readiness to reinforce fort Washington

at a moments notice, or to be applied as events require to any point of defence?—4th. That the force under commodore Barney, may co-operate with the commanding general, in case of the abandonment of the flotilla. On the same day the secretary of war, in a letter, states, that the propositions had been submitted to the president, and general Winder is referred to the navy department on the subject of the propositions relating to the means in that department. General Winder's call upon the militia en masse, is approved; and on the same day the secretary of war, in a letter to general Winder, advises, that the cavalry be pushed into the neighborhood of the enemy without delay, if he indicated an attack upon the city of Washington, for the purpose of driving off all horses and cattle, and all supplies of forage, &c. in their route. Not a moment was to be lost. Colonel Monroe, with captain Thornton's troop of horse, proceeded to find and reconnoitre the enemy on Friday the 19th; on the same day the militia of Georgetown and the city of Washington, under gen. Smith, were mustered. On Saturday the 20th, this and some other forces commenced their line of March towards Benedict about one o'clock, and encamped that night about four miles from the Eastern Branch bridge, on the road to Upper Marlboro. On this day colonel Monroe communicated the intelligence of the arrival of the enemy at Benedict in force. Same day colonel Tilman and captain Caldwell, with their commands of horse, were ordered and despatched to annoy the enemy, impede his march, to remove and destroy forage and provisions before the enemy.

On Sunday morning, the 21st, the troops were mustered, and the articles of war read to them. At 12 o'clock the marines under captain Miller joined the army; the regulars of the 36th and 38th also joined at the Wood-yard, seven miles in advance, to which the main body of our troops were marched and encamped on Sunday night. Two letters from colonel

Monroe, on the 21st, one stating that he had viewed the enemy near Benedict, enumerated 27 square rigged vessels, some bay craft and barges; the other dated from Nottingham, stating the advance of the enemy upon that place by land and water; and recommending the commanding general to despatch 500 or 600 men to fall upon the enemy. Colonel Monroe and colonel Beall both joined the army at night, and gave an account that the enemy had been viewed by them. Colonel Beall calculated that he had seen 4000, without supposing he had seen all. Colonel Monroe estimated the enemy at about 6000: captain Herbert joins with his troop; colonel Lavall had joined with two companies of cavalry on the day previous; the enemy remained at Nottingham, except an advance detachment about three miles from town. Monday the 22d, early in the morning a light detachment was ordered to meet the enemy, composed of the 36th and 38th; lieutenant colonel Scott, colonel Lavall's cavalry, and three companies from the brigade of general Smith, under command of major Peter, viz: his own company of artillery, captain Stull's rifle corps and captain Davidson's light infantry. This detachment marched on the road to Nottingham, about 9 o'clock; the remainder of the army marched about one mile in advance to an elevated position; the commanding general with his staff, accompanied by colonel Monroe, proceeded in advance to reconnoitre the march of the enemy. Commodore Barney had joined the army with his flotilla men, besides the marines under captain Miller; the horse preceded the advance detachment of our forces, met the enemy, and retired before them. This induced the advance corps to take a position to impede the march of the enemy; but the advance detachment was ordered to retrograde and join the main body of the army that had remained some hours in line of battle, expecting the enemy to come that route to the city, but who took the road to Upper Marlboro, turning to his right after having

come within a few miles of our forces; upon which the commanding general fell back with his whole forces to the Battalion Old-fields, about 8 miles from Marlboro, and the same distance from the city of Washington. At this time heavy explosions in the direction of Marlboro announced the destruction of the flotilla under command of commodore Barney. The enemy arrived at Upper Marlboro about 2 o'clock, and remained there until late next day, to be joined, it is presumed, by the detachment of the enemy which had been sent against the flotilla.

The commanding general proceeded to Marlboro, and found the enemy encamped; several prisoners taken, gave information that the enemy would remain in that position until next day; and after making observations of the enemy, till the close of the day, general Winder returned to the army. Late in the evening of this day the president, with the secretaries of war and navy and the attorney general, joined general Winder at the Battalion Old Fields, and remained with him till the evening of the 23d. In the morning the troops were drawn up and reviewed by the president. The most contradictory reports prevailed as to the movements and force of the enemy, and it was doubtful in camp whether Annapolis, fort Washington, with a view to co-operate with his naval forces, or the city of Washington, was his object. As to numbers, rumors vibrated from 4,000 to 12,000; the best opinion was from 5 to 7,000. Our forces at this time, at the Old Fields, are variously estimated, with no material difference, at about 3,000 men, in the following corps: about 400 horse, under the command of the following officers: lieutenant-col. Lavall, col. Tilman, captains Caldwell, Thornton, Herbert, Williams, &c. 400 regular troops, under the command of lieutenant-col. Scott, viz: 36th, 38th, and capt. Morgan's company of the 12th infantry; 600 marines and flotilla-men under commodore Barney and capt. Miller, with five pieces of heavy artillery....two

18 pounders and three 12 pounders: 1,800 militia and volunteers, gen. Smith's brigade of Georgetown and city militia, and Maryland militia under col. Kramer, of which there were two companies of artillery under capt. Burch and major Peter, with six 6 pounders each, making an aggregate of 3,200, with 17 pieces of artillery. The enemy was without cavalry, and had 2 small field pieces and one howitzer, drawn by men; and the whole country well calculated for defence, skirmishing, and to impede the march of an enemy.

The enemy remained at Upper Marlborough till after 12 o'clock; about which time, general Winder again ordered the detachment under lieut. col. Scott and major Peter to advance and meet the enemy if he should be found advancing, or to attack his positions. About this time, 12 o'clock, some prisoners were taken, and from the information given by them and the observations of the videts, general Winder was induced to believe that the enemy intended to remain stationary for the day, which induced him to think of uniting with him the forces at Bladensburg, and despatched orders to general Stansbury, and other corps at Bladensburg, to move direct for Upper Marlborough, and proceeded himself towards Bladensburg, to meet and hurry on the forces to form a junction. When general Winder left the command with general Smith, and proceeded towards Bladensburg, with several troops of cavalry, he left orders that the advance corps should march upon the enemy, and annoy him by all possible means if in march, or if not, then in his positions; and if he advanced upon Bladensburg, general Smith, with the main body, should fall upon his flank, or be governed by circumstances in other movements.

Captain Caldwell joined the advance corps at 2 o'clock, P. M. An express brought intelligence that the enemy had left Upper Marlborough; that our advance had met the enemy about six miles in advance of our forces, and after a skirmish, in which captain

Stull's company had about 4 or 5 rounds, was compelled to retreat, and that the enemy was advancing. One of the aids of general Smith was despatched for general Winder; the whole army was placed in a favorable attitude of defence, in which position it continued until about *sun-set*, when general Winder, who had arrived some time previous, ordered the army to march to the city of Washington. The enemy was about three miles distant, and remained there that night. Having remained till the going down of the sun, the retreat to the city was induced by several considerations, stated by the commanding general. 1st. To effect a union of his whole forces. 2d. The fear of a night attack, from the superiority of the enemy, and want of discipline in his troops. And, 3d. In a night attack his superiority in artillery could not be used. The march of our army to the city was extremely rapid and precipitate, and orders occasionally given to captains of companies to hurry on the men, who were extremely fatigued and exhausted before the camping ground was reached, near the Eastern-branch bridge, within the district of Columbia.

General Stansbury had arrived at Bladensburg on the 22d, and the 5th Baltimore regiment, including the artillery and rifle corps, on the evening of the 23d; and at 12 o'clock at night, colonel Monroe, in passing through Bladensburg to the city of Washington, advised general Stansbury to fall upon the rear of the enemy forthwith, as it was understood that he was in motion for the city. General Stansbury having been ordered to take post at Bladensburg, did not think he was at liberty to leave it; but independent of this consideration, the fatigue of the troops under colonel Sterret, made it impracticable.

It is here proper to state that on the 22d, the secretary of War in a letter to general Winder, which closes their written communications previous to the 24th, except a short note of that morning, states that he

had ordered general Douglass to march with his command to the district without seeking a rendezvous with general Hungerford ; that a detachment of the 12th infantry had arrived ; that it should be armed, equipped and marched to the Wood-yard ; that the Baltimore brigade would arrive at Bladensburg that day ; and suggests the propriety of throwing Barney's seamen and some other troops on the right of Nottingham, a demonstration which would menace the rear of the enemy, and his communication with his shipping, which would, if not stop, much retard his progress. On the morning of the 24th, in a short note to the secretary of war, general Winder says, the information up the river is threatening ; Barney or some other force should occupy the batteries at Greenleaf's point and Navy Yard, and wishes council from the government or the secretary of war. Upon this note there is an indorsement in the hand writing of general Armstrong to this effect ; "went to general Winder, saw no necessity for ordering Barney to Greenleaf's point or Navy-yard, advised the commodore to join the army at Bladensburg, and ordered Minor's regiment to that place."

On the 21st, late at night, colonel Tayloe arrived in the city from the Northern Neck, where he had been charged with orders in relation to the Virginia drafts, and reported himself to general Armstrong, who issued the following general order :

"WAR DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 22, 1814.

12 o'clock.

"General order.

"General Douglass will assemble his brigade at Alexandria, and hold it there subject to orders.

"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

Colonel Tayloe executed this order, and Tuesday night, the 23d, again reported himself to general Armstrong, who issued the following orders :

“WAR DEPARTMENT,

“*General order,*

“Lieutenant colonel Minor will repair to Washington with the regiment under his command with the utmost despatch; he will report on his arrival to colonel Carberry of the 36th regiment, and make a requisition for arms and ammunition.”

(Signed)

“JOHN ARMSTRONG.”

WAR DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 23, 1814.

“*General order,*

“All the militia now in and marching to Alexandria, besides colonel Minor, will march immediately to Washington: these orders will be communicated by colonel Tayloe.”

“JOHN ARMSTRONG.”

On the 18th of August general Van Ness ordered general Young to call out, en masse, the brigade under his command, including the Alexandria militia; the same day two troops of cavalry attached to the brigade were ordered to rendezvous at Bladensburg, on the 19th at four o'clock in the morning, to accompany colonel Monroe, secretary of state, and to be subject to his order. On the 20th, in the afternoon, general Young's brigade was ordered by general Winder to cross the Potomac, opposite Alexandria, and encamp in the best position and wait further orders, which was effected. The brigade consisting of 454 men, two brass six pounders, and one brass four pounder. On the 22d early, general Young, by order of general Winder, marched his brigade and took a position on a height near the head of Piscataway creek, about three miles in the rear of fort Washington, where the ground was favorable for a small detachment to defend the country against a much greater force, and remained in this position until the

morning of the 24th, when several orders were given to him; first, to march towards the Eastern Branch bridge; second, to cross the Potomac to the Virginia side, &c. This brigade was intended in its dispositions to aid fort Washington, the town of Alexandria, and to be in a situation to join general Winder.

On the morning of the 24th, general Winder established his head quarters near the Eastern Branch bridge; detachments of horse were out in various directions as videttes and reconnoitring parties, and arrangements made to destroy the Eastern Branch bridge. Colonel George Minor with his regiment of Virginia militia, composed of 600 infantry and 100 cavalry, arrived at the city of Washington in the twilight of the evening of the 23d; he called on the president who referred him to the secretary of war for orders; the secretary informed him that arms could not be had that night, but gave orders to report himself to colonel Carberry early in the morning, who would furnish him with arms and ammunition, as he was charged with that duty by gen. Winder. From early in the morning till late in the forenoon, colonel Minor sought col. Carberry dilligently, but he could not be found. He rode to head-quarters and obtained an order from general Winder upon the arsenal for arms, &c. marched to the place with his regiment, and its care he found committed to a young man whose caution in giving out arms, &c. very much delayed the arming and supplying this regiment. An instance is here given when the flints were counted out by the officers of the regiment, to expedite business at this crisis, the young man would count them over before they could be obtained.

Colonel Carberry arrived at this moment, apologized for his absence, and informed colonel Minor, that he had the evening previous ridden out to his country seat. Colonel Minor was again delayed some small length of time in having to remain to sign receipts, &c. His men were ordered to capitol hill. In the

mean time various reports were brought into headquarters as to the movements and intentions of the enemy; the president and heads of departments collected at head-quarters, in the following order: The president, next secretary of state, next the attorney general, next the secretary of the navy, and last the secretary of war and treasury together. Col. Monroe had left head-quarters upon a rumor that gained ground, that the enemy was marching upon the city by way of Bladensburg, with a view of joining general Stansbury, advising him of the rumour and to aid him in the formation of a line of battle to meet the enemy. General Stansbury, for reasons given in his report, had marched from his position in advance of Bladensburg, and occupied the ground west of that village on the banks of the Eastern Branch. Here the front line of battle was formed by general Stansbury and his officers, with the aid of colonel Monroe, on the presumption that general Stansbury's brigade, and the command of col. Sterret, including the command of major Pinkney and Baltimore artillery.

There is a bridge over the Eastern Branch at Bladensburg, and a large turnpike road leading direct to the city of Washington. About 400 yards from this bridge, some small distance to the left of the road, the Baltimore artillery, six pieces of six pounders, occupied a temporary breast-work of earth, well calculated to command the pass over the bridge. Part of the battalion of riflemen, under major Wm. Pinkney, and one other company, took position on the right of the artillery, partially protected by a fence and brush; and on the left of the battery, leading to the rear of a barn, two companies, from the regiment under colonel Shutz, and the other part of the riflemen from Baltimore. Col. Ragan was posted in the rear of major Pinkney, his right resting on the road; col. Shutz continuing the line on the left, with a small vacancy in the centre of the two regiments; and col. Sterret formed the extreme left flank of the

infantry. At this moment, colonels Beall and Hood entered Bladensburg, with the Maryland militia from Annapolis, crossed the bridge and took a position on a most commanding height, on the right of the turnpike, about 300 yards from the road, to secure the right flank. In the mean time, (about 11 o'clock) certain intelligence was received at head-quarters, that the enemy was in full march towards Bladensburg; which induced gen. Winder to put in motion his whole force, except a few men and a piece of artillery left at the Eastern Branch bridge to destroy it. The day was hot, and the road dusty... the march was rapid to Bladensburg. The cavalry and mounted men arrived, and were placed on the left flank, and some small distance in its rear. General Winder now arrived, and told general Stansbury and colonel Monroe, that his whole force was marching for Bladensburg, and approved the dispositions which had been made of the troops; at which moment, it had become impracticable, in the opinion of the officers, to make any essential change: for the two armies were now coming to the battle ground, in opposite directions; and the enemy appeared on the opposite heights of Bladensburg, about a mile distant, and halted 15 or 20 minutes. This was about 12 o'clock. The troops from the city were disposed of as they arrived. Capt. Burch, with 3 pieces of artillery, was stationed on the extreme left of the infantry of the first line; and a rifle company, armed with muskets, near the battery, to support it. About this time the secretary of war arrived, and in a few minutes after, the president and the attorney general, and proceeded to examine the disposition of the troops. In the mean time, as the enemy advanced into Bladensburg, the officers were forming rapidly the second line. The command of commodore Barney came up in a trot; and formed his men on the right of the main road, in a line with the command under colonels Beall and Hood, with a considerable vacancy, owing to the ground. The heavy artillery com. Barney plant-

ed in the road; the three 12 pounders to the right, under capt. Miller, who commanded the flotilla men and marines, as infantry, to support the artillery. Lieut. col. Kramer, with a batalion of Maryland militia, was posted in a wood, in advance of the marines and colonels Beall and Hood's command. The regiment under command of col. Magruder, was stationed on the left of com. Barney, and in a line with him and col. Beall. The regiment under command of col. Brent, and major Warrings battalion, and some other small detachments, formed the left flank of this second line, and in the rear of major Peter's battery; and lieut. col. Scott, with the regulars, was placed in advance of col. Magruder, and to the left, forming a line towards major Peter's battery, but in such a manner as not to mask it; other small detachments in various directions.

About half after 12 o'clock, while the second line was thus forming, the enemy approached and the battle commenced: the Baltimore artillery opened a fire and dispersed the enemy's light troops now advancing along the street of the village, who took a temporary cover behind the houses and trees, in loose order, and presented objects only occasionally for the fire of the cannon. The enemy commenced throwing his rockets, and his light troops began to concentrate near the bridge, and to press across it and the river which was fordable above. The battalion of riflemen, under major Pinkney, now united gallantly with the fire from the battery. For some minutes the fire was continued with considerable effect; the enemy's column was not only dispersed while in the street, but while approaching the bridge they were thrown into some confusion, and the British officers were seen exerting themselves to press the soldiers on. Having now gained the bridge, it was passed rapidly, and as the enemy crossed, flanked, formed the line and advanced steadily on, which compelled the artillery and battalion of riflemen to give way, after which major Pinkney was severely wounded. He exerted himself to rally his men, and

succeeded at a small distance in the rear of his first position, and united with the fifth Baltimore regiment.

It appears from reports of several officers, Stansbury, Pinkney, Law, Sterret, &c. that the command of general Stansbury was 3 or 400 yards in the rear of the battery, and major Pinkney's riflemen and some other small corps to the left at the battery; of course this small party had to fight with the whole force of the enemy until they retired, and the enemy occupied the ground they left without any considerable resistance, as the enemy marched on without halting after the bridge was passed. Capt. Burch and colonel Sterret were about the same distance, when colonel Sterret was ordered to advance to support the first line. One of the pieces of artillery was abandoned, but spiked previously. The enemy soon took advantage of the trees of an orchard which was occupied or held by the force which had just retreated, and kept up a galling fire on part of our line. Captain Burch's artillery and a small detachment near it now opened a cross fire upon the enemy. Colonel Sterret, with the fifth Baltimore regiment, was ordered to advance, and made a prompt movement until ordered to halt, as at this moment the rockets assuming a more horizontal direction and passing near the heads of colonels Shutz and Ragan's regiments, the right gave way, which was followed in a few minutes by a general flight of the two regiments, in defiance of all the exertions of generals Winder, Stansbury and other officers. Burch's artillery and the 5th regiment remained with firmness: the orchard obstructed their fire; but notwithstanding, the enemy's light troops were, for a moment, driven back by them; the enemy having gained the right flank of the fifth, which exposed it, Burch's artillery and colonel Sterret, who commanded the fifth, were ordered by general Winder to retreat, with a view of forming at a small distance in the rear; but instead of retiring in order, the fifth, like the other two regiments under general Stansbury, in very few minutes were retreating in disorder and con

fusion, notwithstanding the exertions of col. Sterret to prevent it. From reports of various officers exertions were made to rally the men and to bring them again to the battle, which partly succeeded in the first instance, but ultimately, and in a short time, all attempts were vain, and the forces routed; and the first line, together with the horse, were totally routed and retreated in a road which forked in three directions; one branch led by Rock Creek Church, to Tenley Town and Montgomery court house, another led to George Town and a third to the city of Washington. It does not appear that any movement was made or attempted by the cavalry or horsemen, although the enemy to the left were in open and scattered order, as they pursued or pressed upon our lines, and a most fortunate moment presented itself for a charge of cavalry and horsemen.

It may be proper here to observe, that general Winder states his exertions to direct the retreating line to the capitol, with a view of rallying. This intention is corroborated by colonel Sterret; but it appears as if this determination was not generally understood by the officers or men. Colonel Kramer, posted on the right of the road and in advance of commodore Barney, was next drawn from his position after having maintained his ground with considerable injury to the enemy, and retreated upon the command of colonels Beall and Hood, on a commanding eminence to the right. After the retreat of the militia under colonel Kramer from his first position, the enemy's column in the road was exposed to an animated discharge from major Peter's artillery, which continued until they came into contact with commodore Barney: here the enemy met the greatest resistance and sustained the greatest loss, advancing upon our retreating line. When the enemy came in full view, and in a heavy column in the main road, commodore Barney ordered an 18 pounder to be opened upon them, which completely cleared the road, scattered and re-

pulsed the enemy for a moment. In several attempts to rally and advance the enemy was repulsed, which induced him to flank to the right of our lines in an open field. Here captain Miller opened upon him with the three 12 pounders, and the flotilla men acting as infantry, with considerable effect. The enemy continued flanking to the right and pressed upon the command of colonels Beall and Hood, which gave way after three or four rounds of ineffectual fire, at a considerable distance from the enemy, while colonel Beall and other officers attempted to rally the men on this high position. The enemy very soon gained the flank and even the rear of the right of the second line. Commodore Barney, captain Miller and some other officers of his command being wounded, his ammunition waggons having gone off in the disorder, and that which the marines and flotilla men had been exhausted; in this situation a retreat was ordered by commodore Barney, who fell himself into the hands of the enemy.

The second line was not exactly connected, but posted in advantageous positions in connection with and supporting each other. The command of general Smith, including the Georgetown and city militia, still remained in order and firm without any part having given away, as well as the command of lieutenant colonel Scott of the regulars, and some other corps. The enemy's light troops had in the mean time advanced on the left of the road, and had gained a line parallel with Smith's command, and in endeavouring to turn the flank, colonel Brent was placed in a position, calculated to prevent it; the enemy also advanced, and came within long-shot of part of colonel Magruder's command, which opened a partial fire, but without much effect; and at this moment and in this situation general Winder ordered the whole of the troops then stationary, to retreat, which was effected with as much order as the nature of the ground and the occasion would permit; these troops after retreating 5 or

600 paces, were halted and formed, but were again ordered to retreat by general Winder. General Winder then gave orders to collect and form the troops on the heights west of the turnpike gate, about one mile and a half from the capitol, which order was in part executed, and the forces formed by general Smith and the other officers, when colonel George Minor came up with his regiment of Virginia volunteers, and united his forces with general Smith's command, having been detained, as before stated, in obtaining arms, ammunition, &c.; but, while in the act of forming, general Winder gave orders to retire to the capitol, with an expectation of being united with the troops of the first line. Colonel Minor was ordered to take a certain position and disposition, and cover the retreat of all the forces by remaining until all had marched for the capitol. The troops were again halted at the capitol while general Winder was in conference with colonel Monroe and general Armstrong.

The first line and the cavalry, except one troop of col. Lavall's, had taken a route which did not bring them to the capitol; the most of them had proceeded north of the district of Columbia, and others dispersed and returned home, and sought refreshment in the country. The commanding general represented the diminution of his force, the dispersion of a large portion of it, the want of discipline, the great fatigue of the troops, and believed that it would be impossible to make effectual resistance to the invasion of the city; nor did he think it would be proper to attempt to defend the capitol, the troops being without provisions, and which would leave every other part of the city to the mercy of the enemy, and the prospect of losing his army. In this consultation the secretaries of state and war, it appears, concurred in their views with gen. Winder, and advised him to retire and rally the troops upon the heights of Georgetown; this produced an order for the whole forces to retreat from capi-

tol hill through Georgetown. On receiving this order the troops evinced the deepest anguish, and that order which had been previously maintained was destroyed. General Smith in his report uses this language, "when the order for a retreat from capitol hill was received, the troops evinced an anguish beyond the power of language to express." The troops were halted at Tenley town, and an attempt was made to collect them together, which only partially succeeded. Some returned home; some went in pursuit of refreshments, and those that halted gave themselves up to the uncontrolled feelings which fatigue, exhaustion, privation and disappointment produced. The force thus collected were marched about five miles up the Potomac, and early in the morning, Thursday the 25th, orders were given to assemble the troops at Montgomery court-house. Gen. Winder seems to have taken this position with a view to collect his forces, and to interpose for the protection of Baltimore, in case the enemy marched upon it as was anticipated by him. On the 23d general Winder despatched an order to the commanding officer at fort Washington to place patrols on every road leading to the garrison; and upon the event of his being taken in the rear of the fort, to blow it up and retire across the river. On the 26th, the army at Montgomery took up the line of march about ten o'clock towards Baltimore: general Winder proceeded on to Baltimore. On the 27th, general Smith's brigade marched to this district.

The distance from Benedict to the city of Washington, by Bladensburg, is upwards of fifty miles. The enemy was without baggage waggons or means of transportation; his troops much exhausted with fatigue; many compelled to quit the ranks, and extraordinary exertions used to keep others in motion: and as if unable to pursue our forces, remained on the battle ground: the enemy's advance reached the city about 8 o'clock in the evening, the battle having ended about 2 o'clock, or before. The main body of the

enemy remained on the heights west of the turnpike gate.

Doctor Catlett, the superintending surgeon, who was admitted to attend upon the wounded, and who passed through the enemy's camps and remained at Bladensburg until the city was evacuated, had the best opportunity of estimating the loss on both sides, as well as a good opportunity to ascertain the number and force of the enemy. His estimate is as follows :

Of the enemy.—On capitol hill, 700 ; turnpike hill, 2000 ; wounded at Bladensburg, 300 ; attendants, 300 ; wounded and attendants in the city of Washington, 60 ; killed at Bladensburg and the city, 180 ; total force, 3540. This statement is corroborated by all the information in his power, besides his own observations. Mr. Law estimated the enemy, on its march, at 5000 ; but from the best information, his estimate would be about 4,500. Col. Monroe, who viewed the enemy on his march, estimated the number at about 6000. Gen. Winder states that the best opinion at the Wood-yard, made the enemy from 5 to 7000. *Our forces*, are variously estimated ; and indeed, from the manner of collecting them, and their dispersion, makes it difficult to ascertain the number with perfect accuracy. Gen. Stansbury represents colonel Ragan's regiment at 550 ; col. Schutz's regiment at 800 ; colonels Beall's and Hood's, at 800 ; col. Sterret's regiment at 500 ; major Pinckney's command, including two companies of artillery, 300 ; making 2953. But general Winder estimates colonel Beall, 6 or 700 : deduct 100, this leaves 2853. To which add the command of general Smith, and militia that united with him at the Wood-yard, Battalion Old-fields, &c. the regulars under lieut. colonel Scott, Barney's command, the cavalry, &c. 3200 ; making an aggregate number of 6053. Besides this force, several detachments are spoken of by general Winder's officers, not known, amounting to several hundred. But as a small detachment was left at the Eastern-branch bridge, others, particularly some of

the cavalry, were on detachment, reconnoitring, &c. the number of our forces may be estimated at least 6000, including about 20 pieces of artillery, 2 eighteen pounders, 3 twelves, and the balance six pounders. Our loss on the field of battle, killed, is estimated, by the superintending surgeon, at 10 or 12, and the wounded, some of whom died, at about 30. General Winder's official report estimates our loss at about 30 killed and 50 wounded.

The probable estimate of British forces on the 24th August: Total, 4,500. Killed at Bladensburg and in the city, 150; wounded at both places, 300. American forces, 6,000. Killed, 20; wounded, 40; besides the regiment under command of colonel Minor, 600 infantry and 100 horse, which met the retreat on the west of the turnpike gate; and gen. Young's brigade, about 500, which was ordered to remain on the banks of the Potomac, about 12 miles from the city of Washington, until the evening of the 24th, when he crossed over to Alexandria, and proceeded to Montgomery court-house, to join the main army.

The enemy, on the evening of the 25th, made the greatest exertions to leave the city of Washington. They had about 40 indifferent looking horses, 10 or 12 carts and waggons, one ox cart, one coach, and several gigs; these were sent to Bladensburg to move off the wounded: a drove of 60 or 70 cattle preceded this party. Arriving at Bladensburg, the British surgeon was ordered to select the wounded who could walk; the 40 horses were mounted by those who could ride; the carts and waggons loaded, and upwards of 90 wounded left behind. About 12 o'clock at night the British army passed through Bladensburg; and parties continued until morning, and stragglers until after mid-day. The retreat of the enemy to his shipping was precipitate and apparently under an alarm, and it is supposed that it was known to him that our forces had marched to Montgomery court-house

The hon. Richard Rush, gen. Stansbury, major Wm. Pinkney, Dr. Catlett, and Mr. Law, all remark, that general Winder was active and zealous, encouraged the men and exposed himself, and acted as a man of firmness during the engagement, and endeavored to rally, with other officers, the lines as they gave way.

There seems to be a general concurrence of statement, that our forces were much fatigued, and worn down with marching, counter-marching, and their strength much exhausted, during their service, by remaining under arms much of the night, as well as the day, by false alarms, and otherwise. Nor does it appear, that it was generally known, among the officers and men of the first line, that the forces from the city were formed behind in the second line, to meet the enemy and support them. This statement is made by gen. Stansbury, major Wm. Pinkney, and some other officers of the first line.

RECAPITULATION.

This statement of facts has brought the committee to a recapitulation of some of the prominent circumstances in this part of the transaction. Without entering into the consideration of the means in the power of the administration, and the equal claims of every part of the extensive maritime and territorial frontier of the United States, in proportion to its importance and exposure, to defensive measures, the committee are of opinion that the means authorized for the security of the 10th military district by the president of the United States, in a cabinet council of the 1st of July, were ample and sufficient as to the extent of the force, and seasonable as to the time, when the measures were authorized. On the 2d of July the 10th military district was constituted and the command given to general Winder. On the 4th of July the requisition upon the states for 93,500 men was made. On the 14th of July the gover-

nors of Pennsylvania and Virginia acknowledged the receipt of the requisition of the 4th, and promised promptitude. About the tenth of July the governor of Maryland was served with the requisition, and took measures to designate a corps of 6,000 men, the whole quota from that state. On the 12th of July gen. Winder was authorized, in case of menaced or actual invasion, to call into service the whole quota of Maryland. On the 17th gen. Winder was authorized to call into actual service not less than 2 nor more than 3,000 of the drafts assigned to his command, to form a permanent force to be stationed in some central position between Baltimore and the city of Washington. On the same day, 17th of July, general Winder was authorized to call on the state of Pennsylvania for 5,000 men; on Virginia, 2,000; on the militia of the district of Columbia, in a disposable state, 2,000; together with the 6,000 from Maryland, making an aggregate force of 15,000 drafted militia, 3,000 of which *authorized* to be called into actual service, the residue in case of actual or menaced invasion, besides the regular troops estimated at 1,000, making 16,000, independent of marines and flotilla men. This was the measure of defence contemplated for the military district No. 10, and the measures taken by the war department up to the 17th of July in execution of it.

In relation to the collection of this force several unfortunate circumstances intervened to produce a great and manifest failure. 1st. On the 17th of July general Winder was authorized, in consequence of his own suggestions and in conformity to the wishes of the president, to call into actual service as many as 3,000, and not less than 2,000 of the drafts, under the requisition of the 4th of July, assigned for the operations of his district, as a permanent corps and rallying point with his other forces in a central position as before stated, to protect Baltimore, the city of Washington, &c. in case of invasion. General Winder, upon the receipt of this authority, proceeded direct

to Annapolis, and made this requisition upon the governor of Maryland for the actual service of 3,000 men; and on the 23d of July, 32 days previous to the battle at Bladensburg, general Winder informs the secretary of war that the arrangement for this force had been made, orders had issued and Bladensburg fixed as the place of rendezvous; and encourages expectation that the collection of the force would be prompt and certain. On the 27th, the governor of Maryland informs the secretary of war that measures had been taken to comply with the requisition of the 4th of July, and his orders had issued calling into actual service 3,500 men, to rendezvous at Bladensburg, to comply with the demand of general Winder, in conformity to the wishes of the president. In the mean time Stansbury's brigade had been called into service at Baltimore, on account of the alarm about the 15th of July, by the secretary of war; and although this force constituted a part of the Maryland quota of six thousand, by the consent of the secretary of war, it was to make no part of the 3,000 to be called into actual service for the purposes mentioned.

To form a correct estimate of this failure, which did not bring as many hundred men into the field in the words of general Winder, it may be proper to state, that at all times the marines, flotilla men and regular troops, including the different garrisons, amounted to upwards of 1,000 men. The militia of the district of Columbia amounted to 2,000 men. These were always in a disposable state, and acknowledged by gen. Winder, in his letter of the 23d, to be almost as efficient as if in actual service, and the event proved this to be correct. The disposable force at Baltimore, including Stansbury's brigade, amounted to upwards of 2,000 men, as the event proved, making an efficient force of at least 8,000 men, if the call for 3,000 had been complied with. To this add the designated force assigned to the 10th military district, and the force to be raised on the spur of the occasion

by calls upon the militia and population of the country en masse, and whose disposition is always operated upon more or less in proportion to the prospect of success. On the 13th of August, 21 days after the secretary of war was informed that this arrangement had been made, gen. Winder advises him that there would be almost a total failure in relation to the call for the 3000 men, and as a temporary remedy proposes the acceptance of certain state troops supposed to be about 1,000, under colonels Beall and Hood, then in service at Annapolis, which was authorized; and these troops came to the battle ground, as before stated, about one half hour before the action on the 24th of August. The reasons which operated to produce this failure have been detailed, and there can be no object in having them repeated, as the committee do not consider it a duty to discuss the merit of those considerations.

2dly. On the 17th of July, the secretary of war, by letter, authorized the commanding general to call on Pennsylvania for 5,000 men; on Virginia for 2,000 men, &c. as before stated. This letter was not received by gen. Winder until about the 8th of August, as appears by his correspondence with the governor of Pennsylvania, after a lapse of about 23 days. In explaining the delay in the receipt of this letter, general Winder says it originated from his being in constant motion in traversing and examining the situation and various military positions of his command, and the letter had gone the circuit with him without having received it. It is impossible for the committee to say what particular influence this circumstance had upon the collection of the troops: and it may be proper here to state, that the difficulties explained in relation to the militia laws of Pennsylvania had no bearing upon the failure of our arms, as no specific call was made upon that state till the 17th of August, when one regiment was demanded, and on the 18th the whole 5000 were demanded; but this requisition was not received by the governor of Pennsylva-

nia until the evening of the 23d, at which time the Pennsylvania detachment had been designated under the requisition of the 4th, and ready for the call which was made upon it.

3dly. The unfortunate circumstances which delayed the arming of a Virginia regiment under col. George Minor, consisting of 600 infantry and 100 horse, who arrived in the city of Washington late on the evening of the 23d. Colonel Minor called on the secretary of war, after early candle light, for orders. Col. Carberry had been charged with supplying the various corps with arms, ammunition, &c. Colonel Minor was directed to report himself to colonel Carberry early next morning, who would furnish him. Colonel Minor was in pursuit of colonel Carberry from very early in the morning until late in the forenoon, without finding him; and after obtaining an order from general Winder, marched his regiment to Greenleaf's point to the arsenal and magazine; where he again met with difficulties as before stated, which delayed his march and prevented him from being in the action. Having made this recapitulation of facts, the military question is presented for consideration: and having furnished the most ample means to the house, to form correct opinions on this part of the inquiry, and as most of the communications from military characters enter more or less into this military view, the committee take it for granted that they have discharged their duty, by the view they have taken, and submit this question to the consideration of the house.

THE NAVY DEPARTMENT.

As it regards the part taken by the secretary of the navy, including the destruction of the navy-yard, &c. the solicitude of the president, in anticipation of the probable designs of the enemy against this city and the adjacent country, induced the secretary of the

navy to cause 3 twelve pounders to be mounted on field carriages, and completely furnished for field service, in the month of May last, and the marines trained to act as infantry or artillery. Previous to the reinforcement of the enemy in the Patuxent, he caused to be mounted 2 long eighteen pounders on field carriages, and prepared for field service, to be given to com. Barney, in case of emergency, to co-operate with the land forces; and com. Barney was instructed to prepare for this eventual service in case he had to abandon his flotilla. On the 18th of August, the secretary received the first intelligence of the reinforcement of the enemy; the day on which they landed at Benedict. Com. Barney was ordered to destroy his flotilla whenever it appeared certain that it would otherwise be captured, and to unite and co-operate with the forces under command of general Winder. Letters were dispatched to com. Rogers and capt. Porter, with orders to repair with their forces towards the city of Washington, with the utmost expedition; with every exertion, com. Rogers was unable to reach the city by the 24th. The enemy entered our waters on the 16th; it was known in this city on the 18th; marched from Benedict on the 20th; and entered this city on the 24th; and left it precipitately on the evening of the 25th. The secretary of the navy called on gen. Winder on the 20th; pointed out the volunteer mechanics of the navy yard, then in his army, who were good axe-men, and would act with effect as pioneers. It was understood that a large squadron of the enemy's fleet had passed the principal obstacle in the navigation of the Potomac, and was ascending to co-operate with their land forces. The secretary of the navy expressed solicitude for fort Washington, and proposed to throw into that fort the marines and part of the seamen for its defence: the commanding general did not think it expedient to lessen his force by the abstraction of a part so efficient as the marines and seamen.

The secretary of the navy visited the navy-yard on the 21st; enquired the means of transportation and the assistance left in the yard. The mechanics of the yard had been with the army from the first alarm: four officers and a few of the ordinary, chiefly blacks, remained: two of the old gun-boats, the only craft for transportation. The waggons of this district had been pressed for the army; and the blacks usually in the market for hire, were employed at the works at Bladensburg. Orders were given for every means of transportation to be used. The public vessels afloat were, the new sloop of war Argus, the new schooner Lynx, 3 barges, and 2 gun-boats. On the *hip*, the frigate Columbia, of the largest class, nearly ready for launching; her equipments generally made and ready, or in great forwardness. Besides the buildings, engines, fixtures, shop furniture, of the several mechanical branches in the navy-yard, there were about 100 tons of cordage, some canvass, considerable quantity of salt-petre, copper, iron, lead, block-tin, naval and military stores, implements, and fixed ammunition, with a variety of manufactured articles in all the branches; 1743 barrels of beef and pork, 279 barrels of whiskey, some plank and timber.

The secretary states, that he had no means left to transport the sloop Argus, nor place of safety, in his opinion, if the enemy took possession of the city. He ordered the barges to the Little Falls. On the morning of the 24th the secretary visited the head-quarters of general Winder, near the *Eastern Branch bridge*. The president and some of the heads of departments were present. The secretary of the navy presented to the president the consideration of the navy yard, in presence of the secretaries of war and treasury. The public vessels and public property were described; the importance of the supplies and shipping to the enemy; and no doubt seemed to be entertained of the union of the squadron and the land forces, should the enemy succeed in the capture of the city

of Washington, general Winder having distinctly stated that morning that fort Washington could not be defended. In this event nothing could be more clear than the plunder and destruction of the public buildings and property of the navy yard; and whether a junction was formed, or the land forces alone took the city, the loss of the navy yard and public property was certain. Upon this representation the secretary of the navy, in his report, says, it was distinctly understood, as the result of the conversation, that the public shipping, naval and military stores and provisions at the navy yard, should be destroyed in the event of the enemy's obtaining possession of the city. It appears that the articles to be destroyed were in store and could not be separated from those establishments which might have been left; one of the barges was sent to Alexandria and remained there until taken by the enemy; one gunboat, with salt provisions, has been recovered, the other was laden with provisions and gun-powder, but run aground and was plundered by the inhabitants about the navy yard. The powder and part of the provisions have been recovered. The new schooner *Lynx* escaped the flames and remains without much injury. The metallic articles are chiefly all saved, and the timber in dock and that which is partially consumed will be useful. The machinery of the steam engine is not much injured; the boiler is perfect. The buildings, with the exception of the house of the commandant, the lieutenant of the guards, the guard houses, the gateway, and one other building, are all destroyed; the walls of some appear entire. The monument to perpetuate the memory of the naval heroes who fell in the attack upon Tripoli, is a little defaced. The issuing store of the yard and its contents, which escaped the original conflagration, were destroyed by the enemy on the 25th.

The following estimate of the public property and buildings is the most accurate that the commit-

tee have been able to obtain, and which to them is as satisfactory and as accurate as the nature of the inquiry would admit, viz.

The capitol, from its foundation to its destruction, including original cost, alterations, repairs, &c.	787,163 28
The president's house, including all costs,	334,334 00
Public offices, treasury, state, war and navy,	93,613 82
	<hr/>
<i>Dollars,</i>	<i>1,215,111 10</i>

The buildings have been examined by order of a committee of the senate. The walls of the capitol and president's house are good, and require repairs only. The walls of the public offices are not sufficient. It is supposed that the sum of \$ 460,000 will be sufficient to place the buildings in the situation they were in previous to their destruction,	460,000 00
Loss sustained at the navy yard,	
In moveable property,	417,745 51
In buildings and fixtures,	91,425 53
	<hr/>
<i>Dollars,</i>	<i>969,171 04</i>

To this sum must be added the public library, estimated at - - -

An estimate of the expense of rebuilding, in a plain and substantial manner, the navy yard, so as to carry on all the public works with as much advantage and convenience as previous to its destruction,	62,370 00
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RECAPITUL

No. 1,	Frigate Columbia,	.	.	.
2,	Sloop of war Argus,	.	.	.
3,	One large row-galley,	.	.	.
4,	Two small do.	.	.	.
5,	One armed scow,	.	.	.
6,	One do.	.	.	.
7,	Gun-boats, row-boats, &c.	.	.	.
8,	Boat-builder's shop,	.	.	.
9,	Blacksmith's and plumber's shop,	.	.	.
10,	Cooper's shop,	.	.	.
11,	Gun carriage shop, &c.	.	.	.
12,	Painter's shop,	.	.	.
13,	Block-maker's shop,	.	.	.
14,	Medical store,	.	.	.
15,	Ordnance store, &c.	.	.	.
16,	Naval stores, cordage, &c.	.	.	.
17,	Copper, iron, lead, &c. &c.	.	.	.
18,	Navy store-keeper's stores,	.	.	.
19,	Ordnance small arms,	.	.	.
20,	Provisions and contingencies,	.	.	.
21,	Timber, plank, knees, &c.	.	.	.
22,	Anchors,	.	.	.
23,	Miscellaneous articles,	.	.	.

ATION.

<i>Original value.</i>	<i>Value recovered.</i>	<i>Real loss.</i>
116,123 05	10,432	105,691 05
75,000	10,186 55	64,813 45
4,500	1,477 47	3,022 53
6,000	722 80	5,277 20
1,610 54	956 09	654 45
1,096 29	586 67	509 60
6,553 34	5,773 34	780 00
2,962 98	- -	2,962 98
4,532 80	1,996 50	2,563 30
7,689 75	2,854 04	4,835 71
525	- -	525
869 97	15	854 97
1,610	- -	1,610
2,679 84	- -	2,679 84
18,769 90	- -	18,769 90
78,262 25	- -	78,262 25
49,965 27	42,522 40	7,442 87
20,431 77	2,921 89	17,509 88
173,284 97	162,926 22	10,358 75
46,962 04	4,071 44	42,890 60
45,000	- -	45,000
12,400 94	12,400 94	- -
1,380 13	648 85	731 18
678,210 71	260,465 20	417,745 51



THE CAPTURE OF ALEXANDRIA.

In relation to the conduct of the corporation of Alexandria, and its capture by the enemy in his recent enterprise, the committee have been furnished with various documents and information, and to which the committee refer: but in justice to the town and to the public, a brief retrospect may not be deemed improper, as connecting certain events with the surrender of the town on the 29th of August. October, 1812, a volunteer company was raised in Alexandria, amounting to about 70, including officers; clothed by voluntary aid and donation from the citizens of Alexandria; intended for the lines, but stationed at fort Washington; remained in garrison till December; ordered to Annapolis, and there discharged. March, 1813, capt. Marstellar's company of artillery stationed at fort Washington for upwards of three months. 21st of March, 1813, corporation, by committee, called on the secretary of war for arms, &c. for the defence of Alexandria. 8th of May, corporation, by committee, waited upon the president to apprise him of the defenceless state of the town: president acknowledged that attention was due to the representations of respectable men, and the proper attention should be given, and at the same time apprized the committee of the impossibility, in the nature of things, to give complete protection to every assailable point of the country. 11th of May, committee of vigilance appointed to co-operate with the committee of Georgetown and city of Washington: a deputation from the three committees waited upon general Armstrong, and represented the necessity of additional fortifications at fort Washington: colonel Wadsworth was ordered to attend the committee, examine and report upon their suggestions. The examination was made, and colonel Wadsworth reported that the battery at fort Washington was in such a state, and it so effectually commanded the channel of the Potomac, that it was not to be apprehended that the

enemy would attempt to pass it while its present defences remain entire. Its elevated situation should prevent dread of a cannonading from ships; that in case of designs against the district of Columbia, an assault by land was most probable; to guard against this some inconsiderable work on the land was recommended; an additional fort in the same neighbourhood was considered unnecessary. On the 5th and 13th of August, 1814, the corporation loaned to the United States 35,000 dollars, upon condition that it should be expended south of Alexandria. After the defeat of general Winder at Bladensburg, the corporation by committee waited upon the British commander at this city, to know what treatment was to be expected, Provided Alexandria should fall into his hands. Admiral Cockburn assured the deputation that private property would be respected; that probably some fresh provisions and flour might be wanted, but they should be paid for. Without firing a gun, on the 27th fort Washington was blown up and abandoned by the commanding officer, captain Dyson, who has been dismissed from the service of the United States by a sentence of a court martial, in consequence of it.

On the 28th, after the enemy's squadron passed the fort, the corporation, by deputation, proceeded to the ship commanded by captain Gordon, who commanded, and requested to know his intentions in regard to Alexandria; which he proposed to communicate when he should come opposite the town, but promised that the persons, houses and furniture of the citizens should be unmolested if he met with no opposition. Next day, the 29th, the British squadron was drawn up in line of battle so as to command the whole town. There were 2 frigates, the Seahorse, 38 guns, and Euryalus, 36 guns, 2 rocket ships of 18 guns each, 2 bomb ships of 8 guns each, and a schooner of 2 guns arranged along the town. The committee will not attempt to condense the correspondence and terms of surrender, but refer to it as a part of the

report. One hour was allowed the corporation to decide. It was stated to the British officer that the common council had no power to compel the return of merchandise carried to the country, nor to compel the citizens to aid in raising the sunken vessels: these two points were yielded by the enemy. The enemy was requested to explain what was included in the term merchandise which was to be taken, and in answer it was stated that it would embrace such as was intended for exportation, such as tobacco, cotton, flour, bale goods, &c. The plunder of the enemy was indiscriminate and not confined to any particular class of individuals, and included alike non-residents and inhabitants. The plunder of the enemy was confined principally to flour, cotton and tobacco.

Estimate of the loss: 3 ships, 3 brigs, several bay and river craft, some vessels burnt, 16,000 barrels flour taken, 1,000 hogsheads of tobacco, 150 bales of cotton, 5,000 dollars worth of wines, sugar, &c. In relation to a letter written by admiral Codrington to captain Gordon, the committee will refer to the entire letter of general John Mason, who gives a satisfactory history of this transaction; and to complete this part of the subject reference is had to the statement of gen. Hungerford, giving the movements of his troops, and explains the interviews he had with the deputation from Alexandria, on his march to the city of Washington.

CONCLUSION.

In the inquiry into the causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against this metropolis and the neighboring town of Alexandria, &c. the committee consulted a mode of investigation least embarrassing to themselves and to others. They determined that as it was indispensable to resort to some of the parties for information, not derivable from other sources, it would be equally their duty to hear as far as practicable those who were deeply concerned as to

character and reputation, from the agency they had in this unfortunate transaction, with a determination, that in the event of any contradictions in material circumstances, to resort to impartial sources for explanation or correction. In the mean time the committee called upon those who may be considered as impartial observers for statements, that a just comparison might be made of different allegations and representations. If, therefore, the committee have failed to call upon persons in possession of any additional facts and views not submitted, it has not been through a want of inclination to receive all that could be important, but from a want of a knowledge of such persons and such facts. It was a question with the committee at its earliest meeting, whether personal examinations before the committee should be adopted, or whether resort should be had, in the first instance, to call for written communications to views and interrogatories submitted by the committee, and best calculated to extract every important fact. Several considerations induced the adoption of the latter mode.

It gave the committee command of part of their time to attend to other public duties equally imperious and obligatory. It incurred no expense to government or individuals, who were not interrupted in either their private concerns or public duties. The committee knew the anxiety of the house to have this inquiry closed as soon as possible, and which, by a different course, would have taken up the whole of the session, and encumbered with more useless and irrelevant matter and views than will be found in the communications. The committee feel therefore confident, that the house will be satisfied with the manner in which the subject has been developed; and to correct any possible error, and to receive any important fact or additional matter, although it is not very probable that much can remain, the committee will ask leave to report, with a reservation of a right to make any other communication that may be found necessary to an impartial examination of this subject.

APPENDIX.

IN addition to the report of the committee, in order to give a more satisfactory view and detail upon the main subjects of inquiry, and a variety of incidental matter which has arisen from the investigation, the following communications are referred to as an appendix :

1. In relation to the measures adopted by administration, and the part taken by the president and the heads of departments, the committee refers to the letters from the secretaries of state, war, navy, and the attorney general: one is also expected from the secretary of the treasury which shall be communicated when received.

2. In relation to the steps taken and measures adopted by the secretary of war, the committee refers to the correspondence with the commanding general, the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the letter of colonel Tayloe, two reports from the ordnance office, as to arms, military stores, &c.

3. The conduct of the commanding general, the collection and dispositions of the forces, and the conduct and movements of different corps, the committee refers to the narrative of general Winder, his correspondence with the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the war department and various officers, the reports of general Smith, general Young, general Stansbury, colonel Sterret, major William Pinkney, general Douglass, colonel Minor, colonel Beall and commodore Barney's official letter.

4. In relation to the measures and arrangements and acts of the navy department, including the destruction of the navy yard and the public property,

as well as the destruction of the public buildings in the city, the committee refers to a report from the secretary of the navy, a report from commodore Tingey, and a report from Mr. Monroe, superintendent of the public buildings.

5. In relation to the capture and and capitulation of Alexandria, the committee refer to the proceedings of the court martial upon capt. Dyson; the correspondence between him and the secretary of war, as to the abandonment of the fort; the report of the corporation of Alexandria, including the terms of surrender, &c. and the letter from general Mason, relating to a letter from admiral Codrington.

6. In relation to general information and incidental topics, the committee refers to Mr. Law, general Van Ness, and doctor Catlett.

[24]

DOCUMENTS

ACCOMPANYING THE

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

APPOINTED ON THE

TWENTY-THIRD OF SEPTEMBER LAST,

TO INQUIRE

INTO THE CAUSES AND PARTICULARS

OF THE

INVASION OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

BY

THE BRITISH FORCES

IN

THE MONTH OF AUGUST, 1814.

NOVEMBER 29, 1814.

Printed by order of the House of Representatives.

WASHINGTON:

A. AND G. WAY, PRINTERS.

.....

1814.

A LIST OF THE DOCUMENTS.

-
1. A report of the army, its strength and distribution, previous to the 1st of July, 1814.
 2. Letter of colonel Monroe, then secretary of state.
 3. Letter of general Armstrong, late secretary of war.
 4. Letter from the hon. William Jones, secretary of the navy.
 5. Letters from the hon. Richard Rush, attorney general.
 6. Communication from the war department, including the orders in relation to the tenth military district, the requisition of the 4th of July, and the correspondence with the governors of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland, and with general Winder.
 7. The narrative of general Winder.
 8. Reports of generals Stansbury, Smith, Young, Douglass and Hungerford; colonels Sterrett, Minor, Tayloe, Lavall and Beall; major Pinkney, and captains Burch and Caldwell.
 9. Report from the navy department, including the official report of commodore Barney.
 10. Letters from general Van Ness, Doctor Catlett, and John Law, esquire.
 11. Reports from the ordnance department.
 12. Sentence of the court martial in relation to captain Dyson, and the correspondence between him and the secretary of war.
 13. Report from the corporation of Alexandria, including the capitulation, and letter from gen. John Mason.
 14. Report from the superintendent of the public buildings.
 15. William Simmons's letter.

No. 4.

**A REPORT of the army, its strength and distribution, previous to the 1st of
July, 1814.**

	<i>Effectives.</i>	<i>Aggregate.</i>	<i>Stations.</i>
MILITARY DISTRICT, No. 1.			
40th regiment infantry, . . .	352	379	Boston, Portsmouth, Portland, and Eastport.
Artillerists, . . .	363	276	
Total, .	615	655	
DISTRICT, No. 2.			
Artillerists, . . .	127	149	New London.
37th regiment infantry, . . .	490	565	
Total, .	617	714	

DISTRICT, No. 3.

Artillerists, . . .	378	370
32d regiment infantry, . .	335	602
41st do. . .	628	692
42d do. . .	331	374
Sea-fencibles, . . .	77	78
Total, .	1,849	2,416

New York.

DISTRICT, No. 4.

Artillerists, . . .	108	108
Dragoons, . . .	200	200
Total, .	308	308

Fort Mifflin—recruiting rendezvous.

DISTRICT, No. 5.

Artillerists, . . .	210	224
20th regiment infantry, . .	873	912
35th do. . .		
38th do. 1st battalion, . .		

Norfolk.

DISTRICT, No. 5, continued.	Effectives.	Aggregate.	Stations.
Artillerists,	65	141	Baltimore.
38th regiment, 2d battalion,	300	316	
Sea-fencibles,	167	173	
Artillerists,	40	40	Annapolis.
Do.	79	82	
36th regiment infantry,	320	350	
Total,	2,154	2,208	Fort Washington. St. Mary's.
DISTRICT, No. 6.			
Dragoons,	135	141	North and South Carolina and Georgia.
Artillerists,	413	430	
8th regiment infantry,	688	728	
18th do.	443	482	
43d do.	261	269	
1st rifle regt. 1st company,	87	92	
Sea-fencibles,	100	102	
Total,	2,127	2,244	

DISTRICT, No. 7.

Artillerists,	339	351
2d regiment infantry,	408	423
3d do.	400	420
7th do.	670	694
39th do.	370	394
44th do.	89	97

New Orleans, Mobile, and the
Creek nation.

Total, .

2,276

2,378

DISTRICT, No. 8.

Artillerists,	442	179
47th infantry,		
49th do.	1,591	1,762
24th do.		
28th do.		
Rangers,	317	423
do.	71	108

Detroit, Sandwich, Sandus-
ky, &c.

Total, .

2,121

2,472

District, No. 9.	Effectives.	Aggregate.	Stations.
Light artillery,	458	610	1st or division of the right.
Dragoons,	97	102	
Artillerists,	181	195	
4th regiment infantry,	655	751	
5th do.	275	407	
6th do.	250	518	
10th do.	254	327	
12th do.	482	752	
13th do.	194	381	
14th do.	137	262	
15th do.	317	549	
16th do.	299	434	
29th do.	374	515	
30th do.	274	354	
31st do.	90	99	
32d do.	165	236	
34th do.	183	240	
1st rifle regt. 2d battalion,	223	276	
	4,908	7,108	

Year's men
re-enlisting.

The recruits of the above regiments, the 48th infantry, 300 dragoons, and 264 light artillery, under orders to join this division, will amount to

Total, .

Light artillery, . . .
 Dragoons, (troops mounted) .
 Artillerists, . . .
 9th regt. infantry, . . .
 11th do. . . .
 21st do. . . .
 25th do. . . .
 1st rifle regt. 1st battalion, .

Total, .

4,687	4,687
9,595	11,795
60	66
413	557
624	687
227	501
492	628
458	664
392	606
345	345
3,044	4,074

Buffaloe, Oswego, and Sacket's harbor.

DISTRICT, No. 9, *continued.*

Under orders to join this division :

Artillerists, . . .
 1st regt. infantry, . .
 22d do. . . .
 23d do. . . .

The recruits of the 1st, 9th, 14th,
 21st, and 25th, under orders to
 join, amount to . . .

<i>Effectives.</i>	<i>Aggregate.</i>	<i>Stations.</i>
248	248	
200	214	
359	517	
600	650	
910	910	
5,348	6,613	

Total, .

ABSTRACTS OF TOTALS.

<i>Effectives.</i>	<i>Aggregate.</i>
615	665
617	714
1,849	2,116
308	308
2,154	2,208
2,127	2,244
2,276	2,278
2,121	2,472
9,595	11,795
5,348	6,613
27,010	31,515

No. 2.

Letter of colonel Monroe, then secretary of state.

WASHINGTON CITY, November 13, 1814.

The events in France having greatly augmented the disposable force of the enemy, and his disposition to employ it against the United States being well known, the safety of this metropolis was thought to require particular attention.

On or about the first of July last, the president convened the heads of departments and the attorney general, to consult them on the measures which it would be proper to adopt for the safety of this city and district. He appeared to have digested a plan, of the force to be called immediately into the field; the additional force to be kept under orders to march at a moments notice; its composition, and necessary equipment. It seemed to be his object, that some position should be taken between the Eastern branch and the Patuxent, with two or three thousand men. and that an additional force of ten or twelve thousand, including the militia of the district, should be held in readiness in the neighboring states, to march when called on. The whole force to be put under the command of an officer of the regular army.

The measures suggested by the president, were approved by all the members of the administration. The secretaries of war and navy gave the information required of them, incident to their respective departments. The former stated, the regular force which he could draw together at an early day, infantry and cavalry; the amount of the militia of the district, and the states from which he should draw the remaining force in contemplation, and in what proportions. The latter stated the aid which he could afford, from the officers & seamen of the flotilla on the Patuxent,

and the marines at the navy yard on the Eastern branch. The result of the meeting promised prompt and efficacious measures, for carrying these objects into execution. The command of this whole force, with that of the district No 5, was given to brigadier general Winder.

On the 5th of July I went to Virginia, whence I returned on or about the 25th. After my return I was much engaged in the affairs of my own department.

Calling on the president on the morning of the 18th of August, he informed me that the enemy had entered the Patuxent in considerable force, and were landing at Benedict. I remarked that this city was their object. He concurred in the opinion. I offered to proceed immediately to Benedict, with a troop of horse, to observe their force, report it, with my opinion of their objects, and, should they advance on this city, to retire before them, communicating regularly their movements to the government. This proposal was acceded to. Captain Thornton, of Alexandria, was ordered to accompany me, with a detachment of twenty-five or thirty of the dragoons of the district. I set out, at about 1 P. M. on the 19th, and arrived at 10 next morning in sight of the enemy's squadron lying before Benedict, and continued to be a spectator of their movements until after the action at Bladensburg on the 24th.

The annexed notes contain information which I communicated to the government, of the force and designs of the enemy.

In retiring from Nottingham, late the evening of the 21st, after writing a note to the president, I observed a column of the enemy, in the rear of the town, which I concluded had passed from Benedict by a road near the river, moving in concert with the barges. The number I could not ascertain, having seen its head only. I went immediately to Mr. Oden's, where I met colonel Beall, whom I had before seen at Nottingham. He had taken a view of the enemy's column

from a commanding height contiguous to the town. From his statement, we both concluded that it must have amounted to between 4 and 5,000 men. The force in the barges was supposed to exceed 1,000: so that the whole force of the enemy might be estimated at about 6,000. Hearing that general Winder was at the Woodyard, I hastened to him. He had there about 2,200 men, consisting of the marines, colonel Lavall's cavalry, and the city and Georgetown militia. I understood that he either then gave orders, or repeated those he had before given, to a part of the militia at Baltimore, and to colonel Beall, who commanded 6 or 700 at Annapolis, to move towards Bladensburg to his support.

On the morning of the 22d general Winder put his force in motion from the Woodyard towards Nottingham. At 5 Lavall's cavalry met the enemy a mile in advance of Mr. Oden's. They were in full march, as was inferred, for Washington, with intention to attack general Winder. Our cavalry retired before the enemy, and general Winder, after reconnoitring his force as well as the nature of the ground would admit, retired the head of his column towards the Woodyard with intention to concentrate his force, and form it in line. It was soon perceived that the enemy had taken a road to his right in a direction to Upper Marlborough, at which place they arrived about 2 P. M. on that day. General Winder retired by the Woodyard, to a place called the Old Fields, which covered equally Bladensburg, the bridges on the Eastern branch, and fort Washington. Commodore Barney joined him there with the flotilla men, amounting to about five hundred.

Late on the evening of the 22d, the president, with the secretaries of war, navy, and attorney general, joined general Winder at the Old Fields, and remained with him until the afternoon of the 23d.

After mid-day on the 23d, general Winder detached major Peter with some field pieces, and captains Davidson and Stull's companies, to skirmish with

the enemy near Marlborough, who advanced on him, and took a position near the camp at the Old Fields, menacing it with attack, either that night, or early the next morning, General Winder retired, and passed the Eastern Branch, into the city, that night. Colonel Tilghman, with his cavalry, remained on the road, between Marlborough and Bladensburg.

General Stansbury, with a part of his brigade, arrived at Bladensburg on the evening of the 22d, and the remainder arrived there on the evening of the 23d. This brigade amounted to between 2,200 and 2,300 men.

In the afternoon of the 23d, the president, with the secretaries of war and navy, returned to Washington. The attorney general, and several respectable friends from the city, proceeded with me to the road leading from Marlborough to Bladensburg. Late that evening I heard of the advance of the enemy on the party under major Peter, and against general Winder.

Not knowing the result, I hastened to general Stansbury's quarters at Bladensburg, and found him encamped on the height beyond the village on the road leading to Marlborough. He had just heard of the enemy's movement, but was likewise unacquainted with the result. I had the pleasure to meet there, colonel Sterret and major Pinkney. I advised the general to fall forthwith on the enemy's rear, although it was then 12 o'clock at night. He observed that he had been ordered to take post at Bladensburg, and did not think himself at liberty to leave it; but, had it been otherwise, as a considerable portion of his force had just arrived, after a very fatiguing march, that it would not be in his power to march that night. I proceeded to the city, where I heard that general Winder had crossed the Eastern branch, and taken post near the navy yard.

In the morning of the 24th, I met the president at general Winder's quarters. Among other rumors of the enemy's movements, the general had just

heard that he was marching towards Bladensburg. I asked if general Stansbury was apprized of it. He presumed that he was. I offered to join him. The president and general Winder both expressed a wish that I would. I lost not a moment in complying with their desire. Between 11 and 12, I joined general Stansbury, who had moved his brigade on this side of the Eastern branch, near the bridge. I inquired where were the enemy? He replied, advancing, not more than three miles distant. I advised the general to form his troops to receive them, which he immediately commenced. The order of battle was formed on the presumption that his brigade would alone have to meet the enemy in the first instance. Major Pinkney, with a battalion of riflemen, was placed to the right of the battery to support it; another corps was placed to the left, for the same purpose, and the fifth Baltimore regiment in the rear. On forming the line on the brow of the hill, and extending the right to cover the road leading to Washington, it was found that the left would be much exposed, as it scarcely extended to the rear of the battery. If the battery should be forced, which seemed probable, the enemy's column would turn our left, and ascending the heights and commanding the most advantageous grounds, force us towards the city. This induced, at a late period, the removal of the fifth Baltimore regiment from the rear of the battery, to the left of the line, a measure taken with reluctance, and in haste. Colonel Beall's corps had entered Bladensburg from another route, and was at that moment approaching the bridge. Capt. Thornton was sent to lead it to the height to the right of the road, which commanded the whole of the ground held by general Stansbury's brigade. It was deemed important to occupy that height to protect the line to the left, and likewise to impede the enemy's movement by the road towards the city. The cavalry were placed to the left, somewhat in the rear of the line.

After general Stansbury had made this disposition, Mr. Walter Jones, junior, set out, at my request, for the city, to communicate it to the president, the secretary of war and general Winder, with the near approach of the enemy.

Immediately after this general Winder arrived, and informed us, that his whole force was in full march for Bladensburg. On taking a view of the order which had been formed, he approved it. This was the more satisfactory, because it had then become impossible to make any essential change. The general proceeded promptly, for the enemy were getting in sight, to make a disposition of such of his troops as had arrived. He placed one corps near the battery to support it, and some pieces of artillery on the left of general Stansbury's line. We then passed to the right along the line. Near the road leading from Bladensburg to Washington, we met the secretary of war, and immediately afterwards, at the road, I met the president and Mr. Rush, who had just arrived, and who, joining with me, the secretary of war and general Winder, proceeded together towards the left of the line. Mr. Rush informed me, that the president intended, when every arrangement should be completed, to take a position with the members of the administration, in the rear of the line, that looking to all the functions of the government, he might be able to act with their council according to circumstances. Shortly afterwards the president gave me the same intimation. The action may be said to have commenced, when we had arrived in the rear of the battery near the bridge. The enemy had saluted us with their rockets, and attempting to pass the bridge, our little batteries had begun to play on them. After some pause, the president remarked to the secretary of war and myself, that it would now be proper for us to retire in the rear, leaving the military movement to military men, which we did. The attorney general followed us. After our little batte-

ries were carried, and the left of our line broken, the president, with the members of the administration present, retired along the eminence on which the left of the line had been formed, viewing the progress of the action to the right. On or near the summit of this ground, I separated from the president and the other gentlemen of the administration with him; they continuing to move slowly towards the city; I remaining to view the enemy's progress. At this moment, I fell in again with Mr. W. Jones, junr. who had been charged, as already mentioned, after the line was first formed, with a communication to the president, the secretary of war and to general Winder. Hearing on the road, that the general had passed him, he had immediately returned and delivered to him the message in my presence, and afterwards remained with the Baltimore troops during the action. Inclining to the left, we hastened to the capitol, where we met the secretary of war and general Winder. The general consulted the secretary of war and me, on the propriety of making an attempt to rally the troops on the capitol hill. We both advised him to rally and form them on the heights above Georgetown, believing as I did, that much would be hazarded by an attempt near the capitol. I knew that a column of the enemy had advanced from the high ground which had been held by our troops, and meeting, as they would, with no opposition, might take possession of the heights above the city, and thus force our troops, in case of a new disaster, to the plain between the capitol, the Eastern branch and the Potomac; whereas by occupying the heights above Georgetown, the enemy must either attack us to disadvantage, or, entering the city, expose his right flank and rear to an attack from us.

JAMES MONROE.

*Copy of a letter from James Monroe to the president
of the United States, dated*

Acquasco Mills, 7 miles from Benedict,
August 20, 1814, 1 o'clock, P. M.

DEAR SIR,

I arrived here this morning at 8 o'clock, and have been since within 4 miles of Benedict, at Butler's mill, where it was reported the enemy, on their march, had arrived. The report was unfounded. The enemy landed yesterday at Benedict, and had advanced their pickets within a mile and a half of that mill, for security only. From a height between that mill and the Patuxent, I had a view of their shipping; but being at the distance of three miles, and having no glass, we could not count them. We shall take better views in the course of the evening, and should any thing be seen, material, I will immediately advise you of it. The general idea is, that they are still debarking their troops, the number of which I have not obtained any satisfactory information of. The general idea also is that Washington is their object, but of this I can form no opinion at this time. The best security against this attempt is an adequate preparation to repel it.

Respectfully,

Your friend and servant,

(Signed)

JAMES MONROE.

*Copy of a letter from James Monroe to the president
of the United States, dated*

Horse-head, August 21, 1814.

DEAR SIR,

I quartered last night near Charlotte hall, and took a view this morning at 8 o'clock, from a commanding height below Benedict creek, of all the enemy's shipping near the town and down the river, to

the distance, at least, of 8 or 10 miles. I counted 23 square rigged vessels. Few others were to be seen, and very few barges. I inferred, from the latter circumstance, that the enemy had moved up the river, either against commodore Barney's flotilla at Nottingham, confining their views to that object, or taking that in their way and aiming at the city, in combination with the force on the Potomac, of which I have no correct information. I had, when I left Acquasco mills last night, intended to have passed over to the Potomac, after giving you an account of their vessels from the height below Benedict; but on observing the very tranquil scene which I have mentioned, I was led by the inference I drew from it, to hasten back to take a view of the enemy's movements in this quarter, which it might be more important to the government to be made acquainted with. I am now on the main road from Washington to Benedict, 12 miles from the latter, and find that no troops have passed in this direction. The reports make it probable, that a force by land and water has been sent against the flotilla. I shall proceed with captain Thornton's troop immediately to Nottingham, and write thence whatever may be deserving notice.

The enemy have plundered the country to the distance of three or four miles, of all their stock, &c.

The intelligence of the enemy's force in the Potomac varies here as much as in Washington. I have had no means of forming a correct estimate of it.

(Signed)

JAMES MONROE.

Copy of a letter from James Monroe to brigadier general Winder, dated

Nottingham, August 21, 1814.

SIR,

The enemy are now within four hundred yards of the shore. There are but three barges at hand, and the

force in view is not considerable. If you send five or six hundred men, if you could not save the town you may perhaps cut off their retreat or rear.

(Signed)

J. M.

P. S. Ten or twelve more barges in view. There are but two muskets in town, and a few scattering militia.

Five o'clock, thirty or forty barges are in view.

J. M.

Copy of a letter from James Monroe to the president of the United States.

The enemy are advanced six miles on the road to the Wood yard, and our troops retiring. Our troops were on the march to meet them, but in too small a body to engage. General Winder proposes to retire till he can collect them in a body. The enemy are in full march for Washington. Have the materials prepared to destroy the bridges.

J. MONROE.

Monday, 9 o'clock. You had better remove the records.

J. M.

No. 3.

Letter of general Armstrong, late secretary of war.

LABERGORE, 17th October, 1814.

SIR,

An occasional absence from the place of my usual residence, prevented me from receiving the letter you did me the honor to write to me on the 3d instant, until this morning. I now hasten to fulfil the injunctions of the committee in giving to them "such information, views and remarks, as are deemed pertinent to the subject of their inquiry, and best calculated for an impartial investigation of the causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against the metropolis and the neighboring town of Alexandria."

"Of the *manner* in which the public buildings and other property were destroyed and of the *amount* thereof," I know nothing personally, nor have I recourse to any documents which would enable me to make a satisfactory communication on these points.

The enemy's success in his late enterprise against the city of Washington, &c. must necessarily be traced to one of two causes: the *incompetency* of the means projected and employed to repel his attack, or, the *mismanagement* or *misconduct* of these.

Under the *first* head may be noticed, what was the force, contemplated and ordered by the government as competent? What was that actually assembled and employed? And what other, or additional, means were at the disposal of the government?

The second head would furnish an inquiry strictly military, viz: Whether all was done, that was necessary and practicable, by the commanding general and the troops under his direction? For such an inquiry, I am not prepared, and what, under either head. I may be able to offer, will but be a detail of facts, coming within my official cognizance, without any admixture of opinions.

Early in the month of June last, a call was made on the war department for a general report of the numbers of regular troops and militia, employed by the United States, and the distribution which had been made of these, for the service of the present campaign. This statement was promptly rendered, and submitted by the president to the heads of departments. It is not recollected, that any alteration of the provisions exhibited by this document, was either made or suggested. A reference to it will shew, what was the force then deemed competent for the defence of military district No. 5, of which the city of Washington made part.*

The better to secure the seat of government, &c. from the attacks of the enemy, and to relieve the war department from details not making part of its regular duties, and incident to district No. 5, as then constituted, a new military district, comprehending that portion of country lying between the Rappahannoc and Potomac rivers, the district of Columbia and the state of Maryland, was created on the 2d of July last, and placed under the command of brigadier general Winder, who had been specially assigned by the president to that service.

In an interview with this officer, soon after his appointment, his attention was invited to the state of the existing defences within the limits of his command; to an examination of the different routes by which the enemy might approach the capital; to the selection of points best calculated to retard and to stop his movements, if directed thereto, and to the indication of such new defences, field or permanent, as he might deem necessary and practicable. The better to enable him to discharge these and other duties, a military staff, composed of an assistant adjutant general, an assistant inspector general and two assistant topographical engineers, were assigned to the district.

*This document is in the possession of the president. No copy of it was retained by me.

On the first of July a consultation of the heads of departments was had. The questions proposed for discussion were two:

1st. By what means can the seat of government and Baltimore be defended, in case the enemy should make these cities objects of attack?

2d. Should he select the former, will his approach be made by way of the Potomac, or by that of the Patuxent?

On these questions I took the liberty of offering the following statements and opinions:

1st. That the principal defence to be relied upon, for either place, is militia; that besides the artillery, composing the garrisons of forts M'Henry and Washington, about one thousand regular troops only can be collected, viz: the 36th regiment, one battalion of the 38th, two troops of dragoons, two companies of the 10th, ordered from North Carolina and believed to be on their march, one company of the 12th and two companies of sea-fencibles; that the number of militia called into service, should be proportioned to the known or probable strength of the enemy, and be taken from the states of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania; that it is not believed that the enemy will hazard a blow at either place, with a force less than five thousand men; that to repel one of this extent, we should require at least double that number of militia; that these should be assembled at some intermediate point between Baltimore and the district of Columbia, leaving the sedentary, or undrafted militia of both places, an auxiliary force at the disposition of the commanding general, and that arms and ammunition were in depot and ready for their supply. [Under this head, the secretary of the navy stated, that the removal or destruction of the flotilla, would put at his disposition between six and eight hundred seamen, and that the marines then in barracks exceeded one hundred.]

2d. That the navigation of the Potomac is long and sinuous, and, if not doubtful as to practicability by large ships, is at least uncertain in relation to the time its ascent may occupy; while that of the Patuxent is short and safe, and may be calculated with sufficient precision for military purposes; that should the enemy ascend the former, his object is unmasked; he at once declares his destination, and of course leaves us at liberty to concentrate our whole force against him; that, on the other hand, should he ascend the Patuxent, (or South river) his object is uncertain: it may be the flotilla, or Baltimore, or Washington; and that as long as his point of attack is unknown, so long must our force remain divided; that these considerations suggest the preference he will probably give to the Patuxent, but that this route is not without objections; that a separation from his fleet and a land march of twenty miles through a country covered with wood, and offering at every step strong positions for defence, becomes inevitable; that if these circumstances be turned to proper account against him, if he be not absolutely stopped, his march will be much retarded; that this state of things, on which every wise general will calculate, renders necessary a provision train, or the establishment of small intermediate posts, to keep open his communication with his shipping; that the loss of these would make his situation perilous; and that should the main battle be given near Washington, and be to him disastrous, or even doubtful, his destruction is complete; that after all, believing he will not hazard the movement but with a very superior force, or one he thinks such, it is also believed that he will prefer this route.

Conformably to these opinions, an order was taken to assemble a corps and form a camp at such point between the city of Washington and Baltimore as might be selected by the commanding general.

On the 4th of July, the militia requisition of that date was issued; and of that requisition,

Two thousand effectives from the quota of Virginia; five thousand from that of Pennsylvania; six thousand, the whole quota of Maryland, and two thousand, the estimated number of the militia of the district, were put at the disposition of the commanding general. General Stewart's brigade was already in service, under the authority of the state, and had been supplied with arms, ammunition, tents, &c. by the war department.

At a later period, when discovered that the drafts could not be brought together but slowly and with difficulty, a call upon the militia en masse was suggested by the general and immediately authorized.

Of the force actually assembled and employed I cannot speak with precision, as no return of these troops had been made to the war department during my connection with it. In the letter of the commanding general of the 27th of August, he states the whole force assembled at Bladensburg, on the 24th of that month, at five thousand men; a number less by two thirds than that which had been required. This amazing deficiency is thus accounted for by him: "the slow progress of draft, and the imperfect organization, with the ineffectiveness of the laws to compel them to turn out, rendered it impossible to procure more. The militia of this state and of the contiguous parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania were called en masse; but the former militia law of Pennsylvania had expired on the 1st of June or July, and the one adopted in its place is not to take effect, in organizing the militia, before October. No aid, therefore, has been received from that state."

The third and last point of inquiry under this head is, What other, or additional means of defence were within the reach of government?

Of *naval* means I am not a competent judge, nor do I know what, of this description, were actually employed, nor what it was possible to have super-added; but of those strictly military, I know none

within the view of this question that were omitted. It may be supposed that permanent fortifications should have been multiplied; yet of works of this character but one was suggested from any quarter entitled to respect, and this was a committee of bankers, who thought a new work on the Potomac and below fort Washington, desirable. To this suggestion it was answered, that a small work would be unavailing, and that to erect one of sufficient size and strength was impracticable, for want of money. An offer was then made to supply that want by loaning to the United States \$ 200,000, on condition that this sum should be devoted to the special object of defending the district. An agreement to this effect was made, and the money promised to be paid into the treasury on the 24th of August. The events of that day put an end to the business, and at the same time furnished evidence of the fallibility of the plan, had it even been executed, by shewing that no works on the Potomac will, of themselves, be a sufficient defence for the seat of government. The considerations which governed my own opinion on this subject, and which may have governed that of others, were, that to put Washington hors d'insulte, by means of fortifications, would, from physical causes, among which is the remoteness from each other of the several points to be defended, have exhausted the treasury; that bayonets are known to form the most efficient barriers, and that there was no reason, in this case, to doubt before hand the willingness of the country to defend itself.

In this brief statement you are presented with a view of the force contemplated and ordered by the government; of the means taken to assemble that force through the usual medium of the commanding general;* of that actually assembled and employed,

* His exertions were occasionally aided, and his authority enforced by the war department: see colonel Tayloe's letter enclosed, and let me pray that this gentleman may be examined on the subject of it by the committee.

and lastly, of my impressions in relation to any other or additional means of defence.

I now proceed to the 2d subject of inquiry, the employment of the means we had and the conduct of the troops.

On the of August was received the first notice of the arrival of admiral Cochrane in the bay, and on the same day advices were brought, that he was entering and ascending the Patuxent. These facts were communicated to the general, and he was instructed to take a position near the enemy. On the 22d he was advised to hang on their rear and flank a heavy corps, while he opposed to them another in their front. My reasons for thus advising him were three: if Baltimore was the object of the enemy, this disposition interposed a corps between them and that city; if they aimed at Washington, it menaced their communication with their fleet and the security of their return, and was therefore most likely to hold them in check; and lastly, it did not forbid a concentration of force in their front, at a later period and by a forced march. On the evening of the 22d, I repaired to the army and found it at the *Old Fields*, six or eight miles distant from the enemy. A part of the corps, contemplated for the service mentioned in the preceding article, had joined general Winder, and of the other part (under general Stansbury) no correct account could be given. I took this occasion to urge the necessity of a speedy concentration of our force, and of the usefulness of pushing our picquets frequently and freely upon those of the enemy, as the best means of circumscribing his supplies; of gaining a knowledge of his strength (of which the accounts were various) and of preventing a stolen march which was to be suspected. I was glad to find the general entertained similar views, and that they were in a train of execution. In the afternoon of the 23d I returned to Washington, and during the night of

that day the president transmitted to me the letter, of which that which follows is a copy :

“The enemy are advanced six miles on the road to the Woodyard, and our troops retiring. Our troops were on the march to meet them, but in too small a body to engage. General Winder proposes to retire till he can collect them in a body. The enemy are in full march for Washington. Have the materials prepared to destroy the bridges.

JAMES MONROE.

“Tuesday, 9 o'clock. You had better remove the records.

“*The President of the U. States.*”

On the morning of the 24th, I received a note from gen. Winder, informing me of his retreat and the approach of the enemy, and “asking counsel from me, or from the government.” This letter was late in reaching me. It had been opened, and passed through other hands. The moment I received it, I hastened, with the late secretary of the treasury, to the general's quarters. We found there, the president, the secretary of the navy, and the attorney general. Gen. Winder was on the point of joining the troops at Bladensburg; whither, it was now understood, the enemy was also marching. I took for granted, that he had received the *counsel* he required; for to me, he neither stated doubt nor difficulty, nor plan of attack or of defence. This state of things gave occasion to a conversation, principally conducted by the president and the secretary of the treasury, which terminated in an understanding, that I should repair to the troops, and give such directions as were required by the urgency of the case. I lost not a moment in fulfilling this intention, and had barely time to reconnoitre the march of the enemy and to inform myself of our own arrangements, when I again met

the president, who told me, that he had come to a new determination, and that *the military functionaries should be left to the discharge of their own duties, on their own responsibility.* I now became, of course, a mere spectator of the combat.

If our field combinations were not the most scientific, it ought to be recollected, that many of our troops were incapable of receiving those of the best form,* and that circumstances had rendered the order of battle, on our part, nearly fortuitous. "Much the largest portion of our force," says the general, in his letter of the 27th of August, "arrived on the ground when the enemy were in sight, and were disposed of to support, in the best manner, the position which gen. Stansbury had taken....they had barely reached the ground before the action commenced."

These facts may also explain, why we had no guns in battery in the line of the bridge over which the enemy passed? why a brick house, which enfiladed that bridge and was partially fortified, should not have been unroofed and occupied? and why a frame store house should have been left to cover the head of the enemy's column and its subsequent display? &c. &c.

If, also, the most efficient corps of the army was left out of the original arrangement, and but got into the line when other parts of it "were retreating and apparently in much disorder," it will not be forgotten, that this corps was distinct and independent, and that the general had no authority, of right, to command it. I witnessed the disquietude of the gallant officer who led this corps, at having been assigned to a duty which, in his own strong language, "but required a corporal and six men." The lateness with which he got into a post of more distinction, I

* Upon my enquiring, why the dragoons had not been embodied, masked, and made to charge the right flank of the enemy, the general replied, that an officer of that corps had assured him, that his men could not be brought to a charge.

consider as one of the causes of the disasters of the day : but without all doubt, the determining cause of these, is to be found in that love of life which, in many of the corps, predominated over a love of country and of honor. In illustration of this fact, I refer to the official reports of gen. Winder and of com. Barney, and shall close this letter by adopting the opinion of the former, " that the contest was not maintained as obstinately as could have been desired, but was by parts of the troops sustained with great spirit and prodigious effect; and had the whole of our force been equally firm, I am induced to believe, that the enemy would have been repulsed, notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which we fought."

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

With very great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

P. S.—On what may particularly relate to Alexandria, I beg leave to refer to my official letter to gen. Young, of the 24th of August, and to my note to capt. Dyson, and his reply, of the 29th. It may be, that no copy of the first was kept, in which case the original may be called for.

J. A.

Hon. Col. Johnson, chairman, &c.

No. 4.

Letter from the hon. William Jones, secretary of the navy

NAVY DEPARTMENT, Oct. 31, 1814.

SIR,

In compliance with the request, contained in your letter of the 24th instant, to state to the committee of inquiry "any thing that may be within my knowledge, as to the measures taken and adopted by the administration, and more especially those proposed and adopted at the cabinet council on the first of July last, in relation to the defence of the district of Columbia, with such other views and things as may be deemed, in my estimation, pertinent to an inquiry," I have the honor to reply: That, as the information required involves the confidential proceedings of a cabinet council, I deemed it expedient and respectful to ascertain, from the proper source, whether any obstacles existed to the developement of what passed upon that occasion; and being freed from all restraint upon that question, I proceed to state, briefly, from memory, my general recollections upon the subject of the inquiry.

The serious apprehensions of invasion and devastation, which succeeded the knowledge of those extraordinary events which liberated the powerful naval and military forces of the enemy from European hostility, and the temper of the British nation, as displayed in the language of its journals and conduct of its government, in relation to the pacific mission which it had invited, were deeply felt, and frequently discussed, in occasional conversations between the individual members of the administration, prior to the cabinet meeting on the first of July last, in which the probable points of attack were variously considered. My own impressions inclined to the opinion, that there were some points more exposed, less difficult of access, and more inviting to the enemy, upon the system of warfare he had adopted, than the metropolis;

the only important objects which it presented, according to my view, being the naval depot and public shipping.

I recollect, on one of those occasions, that the president expressed very great solicitude for the safety of the metropolis; his belief that the enemy would attempt its invasion, and urged the expediency of immediate defensive preparations, with all the disposable force that could be conveniently collected. I accorded in the expediency of the preparation, but must confess I was not equally impressed with the apprehension of immediate danger, as well from the reasons I have before assigned, as from the then existing fact, that the force of the enemy, in the waters of the Chesapeake, was entirely naval, and apparently very satisfactorily engaged in conflagrating farm houses, and depredating upon slaves and tobacco, on the shores of the Patuxent. In this sentiment I was not alone.

On the 30th day of June, the members of the cabinet were invited to attend a meeting, at the president's mansion, on the following day at noon.

At or near the time appointed, the secretaries of state, treasury, war, and navy, and the attorney general assembled.

The president stated the object of the meeting to be the consideration of the menacing aspect of things, in consequence of the augmented power of the enemy by the great political changes which had taken place in Europe, and the disposition manifested by the government and people of Great Britain, to prosecute the war with the most vindictive and devastating spirit; represented the motives and inducements which, he conceived, the enemy had, to prefer the invasion of the capital rather than any other immediate enterprise; and urged the necessity of speedy and efficient preparation for the defence of the district and capital; inquired into the existing state of its military and naval defences, and the extent of the disposable force

which it would be practicable to concentrate in the district.

The secretary at war estimated the disposable regular force, applicable to the intended purpose, to the best of my recollection, about twelve hundred, including about two hundred cavalry, at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, who, I think he said, were not all mounted, but would probably be so in a short time. He brought into view the volunteer corps of the city and district, the particulars of which I do not recollect; and estimated the depot at Harper's ferry, I think, to contain, at that time, about thirty-six thousand stands of arms.

The secretary of the navy enumerated the naval force, within immediate reach, as follows:

The marines, at head quarters, about 120

The force attached to the flotilla under the command of commodore Barney, on the Patuxent, about 500

620

To the regular force, the president proposed to add ten thousand militia; to be designated, and held in readiness, in such neighboring districts, as should be found most convenient. He also suggested the propriety of depositing, at a suitable place, contiguous to the metropolis, a supply of arms, ammunition and camp equipage.

These propositions produced very little discussion, the propriety and expediency of the measures appeared to be admitted, though no formal question was taken, nor any dissent expressed.

The meeting separated, with an understanding, on my part, that the measures proposed were to be carried into effect; but what order took place thereon, other than in the department of the navy, I know not; nor do I know any thing farther material to the enquiry, except what is embraced in the communication

which I had the honor to make to the committee on the 3d instant.

The officers of the navy yard are closely engaged in making out the estimates of the loss sustained by the conflagration at that establishment, but the loss of books and papers has retarded their operations. It shall be completed as soon as possible, and transmitted without delay.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

W. JONES.

*Hon. Richard M. Johnson,
Chairman of the committee of inquiry,
House of representatives.*

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

November 12, 1814.

SIR,

I have now the honor to transmit the reports and statements of the commandant of the navy yard, showing the actual loss of public property by the conflagration at the navy yard on the 24th of August last.

EXHIBIT A, Shows the loss sustained in moveable property, viz: the estimated value previous to the fire; the value preserved or recovered, and the actual loss sustained as condensed in the recapitulation on the last page. Net loss, .. 417,745 51

EXHIBIT B, Shows the loss sustained
 in buildings and fixtures,
 in like manner showing
 the estimated cost and real
 loss sustained. Net, . . . 91,425 53

Total loss, \$ 509,171 04

To which is annexed an estimate, (believed to be
 founded upon such data as may be relied upon) of
 the " expenses of re-building in a plain substantial
 manner " so as to carry on all the public work with
 as much advantage and convenience as before the
 fire, amount, \$ 62,370 14

I am very respectfully,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. JONES.

The hon. Richard M. Johnson,
chairman of the committee of investigation,
relative to the incursion of the enemy.

No. 5.

Letters from the honorable Richard Rush, attorney general.

Narrative by R. Rush, attorney general of the United States, of such facts and circumstances as are within his knowledge, relative to the capture of Washington, on the 24th of August, 1814; and of measures adopted by the government in relation to that event, previous to or on that day; delivered on the requisition of a committee of the house of representatives appointed to investigate the causes which led to the capture.

AS my official place in the government embraces no connexion with the duties of either of the four departments further than as I am liable to be consulted on legal questions growing out of the business of either of them, it is not to be expected that I can give information relative to the subject matter of the committee's inquiries, except,

1st. Such as I may have derived from being present at the deliberations of the cabinet when thereto summoned by the executive, supposing any to be derivable from that source; or,

2dly. Such as I may have derived from my personal presence at Washington, and the opportunities thence furnished of becoming acquainted with acts or measures of the government, or other events transpiring at its seat.

In regard to the former capacity, I would beg leave to premise, that, as these deliberations imply an intercourse of confidence amongst those who participate in them, I hope I do not misapprehend the true nature of the connexion between the executive and those whom he may invite to his consultations, or fail in my respect to the committee, when I state, that I do not hold myself bound to make a public disclosure of matters which may, in this mode, have been the sub-

ject of executive advisement or consideration. The exceptions belonging to such a rule, if any do belong to it, I forbear to advert to, inasmuch as I would be understood to have waived upon this occasion the objections which might otherwise be interposed against the developement of transactions from this peculiar source of information. Upon a subject of such delicacy, and one involving future rights, I would beg to be further understood, that in waiving all objection I act under the full belief that it is not desired to restrain the freedom of such a course on my part by any prohibitory injunctions from the quarter whence alone they could issue.

As introductory, then, to what I may have to disclose under this head, and to meet, as far as in my power, the inquiry made as to my knowledge of any preparatory measures adopted for the defence of the metropolis, I proceed to state :

That, in the month of June, of the past summer, when the momentous changes in Europe had become revealed to us, I had the honor of holding, individually, occasional interviews with the president. In dwelling upon our public affairs, he expressed his strong belief of the inauspicious results which these changes held out every likelihood of superinducing upon them. That the entire liberation of British military power from European conflicts, created a corresponding probability that portions of it, unexpectedly formidable, would be thrown upon our shores. In one, at least, of the conversations, he also dwelt upon the probability of an attack upon Washington; enforcing his opinion on the grounds, among others, of its own weakness, and the eclat that would attend a successful inroad upon the capital beyond the intrinsic magnitude of the achievement. He spoke of the immediate necessity of preparing for its defence. His impressions of the danger appeared to acquire new force from the 26th of the month, upon which day despatches were received from two of our minis-

ters abroad, Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard, dated early in May. Upon the 30th of June, the heads of departments were desired to meet at the president's house on the following day at 12 o'clock.

They accordingly assembled. All were present. I, also, in pursuance of the president's request, attended. Our public affairs were brought into discussion; their altered and more menacing character; the probable reluctance of the northern powers of Europe to regard favorably, at such a moment of European homage to the British name, the just rights for which we were contending; the fierce aspect which British military power now had the means, and probably would not want the disposition to put on towards us; the parts of our country most vulnerable to its immediate irruptions, as well as the general trials before us, were brought into view. The president mentioned what I had heard him, individually, express before, relative to Washington; stating his impression, unequivocally, to be, that if it fell within the plans of the enemy to send out troops for operations upon the Atlantic frontier this season, he thought the capital would be marked as the most inviting object of a speedy attack. That it would be right forthwith to put in train measures of precaution and defence. He then declared that, to him, it appeared that a force of ten thousand men should be got in readiness for the city and district. That it would be desirable to have as large a portion of it as practicable, regular troops; but that, at the least, there should be a thousand of this description, and more if more could be obtained. That the residue should be made up of the volunteers and militia of the district of Columbia, combined with that from the parts nearest adjacent of the states of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. That convenient depots of arms and military equipage should also be established. No dissent was expressed to these opinions of the president. The secretary of war

made some verbal estimate of the regiments, or parts of regiments, near at hand. By this it appeared, that, either with or independent of the marines at the navy-yard, (for of this I am not certain) the portion of regular force mentioned could readily be had. I recollect nothing further to have passed at the meeting about the defence of Washington. What measures were subsequently taken; how far those proposed were carried into effect; or by what causes they may have been retarded or frustrated; I have not had the means of knowing with any certainty, and therefore cannot speak. In regard to what I have said, I am disposed to entertain the less distrust of its general accuracy from the habit of keeping occasional written memorandums connected with our public history, and from having refreshed my memory by a reference to some in the present instance made at the time.

As it appears to come within the scope of the committee's inquiries, that I should also disclose such facts as I may possess a knowledge of relative to any participation by the government in the immediate events of the 24th of August, I have to state: That my knowledge herein is merely incidental. As far as it extends, or may appear to have any bearing upon the interrogatories of the committee, I will proceed to unfold it.

On the morning of that day, probably at about 9 o'clock, I called at the lodgings of the secretary of war to ask him for his latest intelligence respecting the enemy's movements. He was good enough to hand me a note he had received from general Win-der, written from his head-quarters, then established within the city limits near the Eastern branch bridge. It was dated, I think, the same morning. It was short, and stated the accounts from the river below to be more and more serious. It also expressed a wish to receive counsel either from the secretary individually, or the executive, as to the operations pro-

per to be adopted in an emergency so critical. Other things may have been in it, but reading it hastily I would not be understood to speak with accuracy of its contents. Leaving the secretary of war, I proceeded to the president's. Arriving there, I learned that the president had gone to the head-quarters of general Winder. Thither I also next went. I there found the president, general Winder, commodore Tingey and two or three military officers. The secretary of state I understood had previously been there, but had gone on to Bladensburg. The secretary of the navy came into the room not long afterwards. Of commodore Tingey's presence I am not certain. The conversation turned upon the route by which it was thought most likely the enemy would make his approach. It was interrupted by dragoons, who had been on scouts, coming in every few minutes with their reports. The preponderance of opinion at this period I took to be that he would be most likely to move in a direction towards the Potomac with a view to possess himself of fort Warburton in the first instance. By this course he would secure the passage of his ships then supposed to be in the river below, and thus their ulterior co-operation, whether in the attack or retreat of his land troops. This way of thinking induced, as I supposed, general Winder to retain a large portion of his force in the neighborhood of the Eastern branch bridge in preference to moving it on, under the existing state of intelligence, towards Bladensburg. In anticipation of success to the enemy's attempts by water, or land, or both, some conversation was had as to the proper precautions for blowing up or otherwise rendering useless the vessels and public property at the navy yard. After the lapse of probably an hour from the time I reached head-quarters, an express arrived from general Stansbury, commanding the Baltimore troops, at Bladensburg, rendering it at length certain that the British army was advancing in that direction.

General Winder immediately put his troops in motion, and marched off with them for Bladensburg.

When he had left the house the secretary of war, in company with the secretary of the treasury, arrived there. The president mentioned to the former, the information which had just been received, at the same time asking him whether, as it was probable a battle would soon be brought on, he had any advice or plan to offer upon the occasion. He replied that he had not. He added, that as it was to be between regulars and militia the latter would be beaten. All who were in the house then came out, the secretary of war getting on his horse to go to Bladensburg, and the secretary of the navy going to the marine barracks close by. Commodore Barney with his seamen and marines, who were still remaining in or near the barracks, were ordered to push on with all despatch to Bladensburg, an order their anxiety stood anticipating. The president first went to the barracks, inviting me to accompany him. He then observed that he would ride to Bladensburg, with a view to join the two heads of departments already gone there, and be of any use in his power. I proceeded on with him. Before we could reach the town the forces of the enemy had possession of it. General Winder, as it struck my eye in riding along, had formed the troops he marched out with him on each side of the road, stretching a mile from Bladensburg, in such way as the few moments left him would allow. But according to what particular plan they were drawn up, or by whose order, I cannot say. The president met with the secretary of war and the secretary of state, upon the field near the front ranks. The former had arrived just before him. When the president arrived the arrangement for the battle, whatever it may have been, was apparently made. It commenced in a very few minutes, and in not many more some of our troops began to break. The president and two secretaries at about this period retired

together. I joined them very shortly afterwards, and rode into Washington with the president.

It does not, at present, occur to me that I can state any thing further relevant to the inquiries of the committee. I shall be ready to answer any questions it may think fit to propound, with a view to recall any explanatory or additional circumstances or facts not recollected above, or which I have not deemed it material to state.

RICHARD RUSH.

Washington city, October, 15, 1814.

WASHINGTON, November 3, 1814.

SIR,

I have had the honor to receive your note of the 29th of last month, requesting of me such information as I may possess relative to a report made early in June, from the war department to the president, of the amount of regular and militia force, and its distribution throughout the country; which report was submitted by the president to the heads of departments; and requesting also, that I will add any further matter to my former narrative which may since have occurred to my recollection, that I may deem material, particularly as to the part taken by the president or any of the members of the government, on the day of the battle of Bladensburg.

With the same reservation which I before took the liberty to make of the privilege of being at my option as to the disclosure of facts of which I may have derived the knowledge through any confidential medium whilst engaged in public duties, I have to state:

That at a meeting which took place of the heads of departments, at the president's, on the seventh of June, at which I also was present, I do remember that a paper was read by the president, which had been furnished by the secretary of war, containing an estimate of all our land force, as well as its distribu-

tion. A similar one was exhibited of the naval force, prepared by the secretary of the navy. This, too, was read by the president. I remember the aggregate amount of the land force, but not the portions of it as then distributed through the respective military districts; or, at least, not that falling within district No. 5. The meeting was called, and the estimate of force submitted, for purposes quite distinct from the defence of district number 5. The latter object being excluded, renders it, I presume, unnecessary that I should trouble the committee with any detail of the deliberations or resolutions that were had upon the occasion.

As regards the other branch of inquiry, I feel at some loss. I am not sure that I do remember any supplemental facts which the committee might think material to be stated, relative to what took place on the day of the battle. Upon this subject I would, with the most entire deference, beg leave to suggest, that perhaps the most eligible course would be for me to answer (as I should ever be ready to do) to such interrogatories as the committee might find it in their discretion or convenience to put, rather than leave in my own hands the choice of topicks. I venture upon the freedom of the remark from the fear that I may omit or introduce matter which, in other eyes, might wear a different aspect of relationship to the investigation to what it had done in mine. When the president expressed his intention of going to Bladensburg, he observed, while on the road, that one motive with him was, that as the secretary of war, who had just gone on, might be able to render useful assistance towards arrangements in the field, it would be best that the requisite sanction to it should be at hand, preventing thereby, at a moment so important, any possible embarrassment, arising from the claims or duties of the commanding general. But when we reached the field we found the troops formed, and waiting in their stations the onset of the battle.

The British army was already in full sight, and advancing in full march, through Bladensburg. At this juncture the president joined the secretary of state and the secretary of war, and all approached to the spot where general Winder was. Some words of conversation seemed to pass between the president and two latter. I was not near enough to overhear it. General Winder rode forward a few yards exhorting the troops to be firm. The firing began almost immediately afterwards. Results took place that are known. It had been the wish of the president, as signified to me on the ride out, that after every military arrangement for the battle had been made on the best advice attainable, the civil functionaries should join him and retire to the rear of the army, with a view to any ulterior deliberations which events might render necessary. I took it to be in conformity with this wish that the secretary of state, the secretary of war and himself retired at the time and in the manner I have stated, and it was in pursuance of it that I accompanied them. Whilst still on the field, encompassed by part of our troops, I think I understood the two secretaries to unite in opinion, that the mode in which they had been drawn up was as judicious as time and circumstances allowed. But of this I do not speak with confidence, as my attention was partly taken up in viewing, from hill to hill, the contending movements. To me it appeared plain that entire ranks of our men in front were dispersed by the shock of the enemy before any order for a retreat was given by the commanding general.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

RICHARD RUSH.

*The hon. R. M. Johnson, chairman
of the committee of investigation.*

No. 6.

Communication from the war department, including the orders in relation to the 10th military district, the requisition of the 4th of July, and the correspondence with the governors of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland, and with general Winder.

BALTIMORE, July 9th, 1814.

SIR,

THE objects of the command which has been conferred upon me, have, consequently, since I received it, occupied my serious consideration.

The utmost regular force, which it is probable can, in the present state of affairs, be placed at my command, including the force necessary for garrisoning the several forts, will not exceed 1000 men, and some weeks will necessarily elapse before the detachments from Virginia and Carlisle will reach my district: the detachments of the 36th and 38th are therefore the only troops that I can expect to have in the field in the mean time; and when those other detachments join, the utmost field force will be seven to eight hundred.

In conversation with you at Washington, I understood the idea, at present entertained relative to the auxiliary militia force proposed for the district, to be, that it shall be drafted and designated, but that no part of it is to be called into the field until the hostile force, now in the Chesapeake, shall be reinforced to such an extent, as to render it probable, that a serious attack is contemplated.

The enemy's fleet has now spent more than a twelvemonth in the waters of the Chesapeake; and during that time, has visited almost every river falling into the bay; and must be presumed to have such accurate information, that whatever expedition may be destined to these waters will have a definitive ob-

ject, to the execution of which, on its arrival, it will proceed with the utmost promptitude and despatch. Should Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis, be their object....what possible chance will there be of collecting a force, after the arrival of the enemy, to interpose between them and either of those places? They can proceed, without dropping anchor, to within three hours' rowing and marching of Baltimore; within less of Annapolis; and upon arriving off South river, can debark, and be in Washington in a day and a half. This celerity of movement, on their part, is not probable, owing to adverse weather and other causes; but if the enemy has been active while in our waters to acquire a knowledge of our country, of which there can be no doubt, and should be favored with weather on the arrival of reinforcements, he can be in Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis, in four days from entering the Capes. But allowing, liberally, for all causes of detention, he can be in either of those places in ten days from his arrival. What time will this allow us to hear of his arrival, to disseminate through the intricate and winding channels the various orders to the militia, for them to assemble, have their officers designated, their arms, accoutrements, and ammunition, delivered, the necessary supplies provided, or for the commanding officer to learn the different corps and detachments so as to issue orders with the promptitude and certainty so necessary in active operations? If the enemy's force should be strong, which, if it come at all, it will be, sufficient numbers of the militia could not be warned and run together, even as a disorderly crowd, without arms, ammunition, or organization, before the enemy would already have given his blow.

Would it not then be expedient to increase the force of my command, by immediately calling out a portion of the militia; so that, by previously selecting the best positions for defence. and increasing, as

far as possible, the natural advantages of these positions, the advance of the enemy might be retarded, his force crippled, and time and opportunity thus gained for drawing together whatever other resources of defence might be competent to resist the enemy. The small force of regulars will be incompetent to accomplish any material works at favorable positions for strengthening the defences, and to supply the various vidette parties, which it will be necessary to station on the prominent points of the bay, to watch the enemy, and communicate his movements with the greatest possible despatch.

Allow me, sir, respectfully to propose that four thousand militia be called out without delay; I propose to station these in equal proportions in the most eligible positions, between South river and Washington, and in the vicinity of Baltimore. Baltimore could not be aided by a force stationed between South river and Washington, unless a force were on the spot to retard the advance of the enemy until it could arrive, and so with respect to the force at Baltimore in co-operating with that intended to defend Washington. Each could assist the other if of this magnitude, and it appears to me that with materially less means actually in the field and ready for instant action, no hope can be entertained of opposing the enemy in assailing either of those places.

I shall proceed to Annapolis to-morrow, and have but little doubt that the executive of Maryland will cordially co-operate in affording such means as it may be deemed adviseable to call for, and I beg you will permit me to procure this, or such other militia force as the president may think proper immediately to be called out.

I sent an order from Washington for the detachments of the 36th and 38th to move up to the head of South river, where I propose to meet them and fix upon the most eligible spot for the camp intended to defend Washington.

You will please therefore to direct any communications to me, to Annapolis, which will enable me to make the requisite arrangements with the executive of Maryland at once.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

W. H. WINDER.

*Brigadier general,
commanding tenth military district.*

*Hon. John Armstrong,
secretary of war.*

UPPER MARLBOROUGH, July 16, 1814.

SIR,

I reached this place last evening, in my tour of examining the country. From what I have seen and learned, it appears to me that there cannot be found a place of tolerable convenience with reference to the objects of defence, for an encampment, except in this neighbourhood. Two places near here offer many conveniences: the one two and a half miles on the Western branch, and the road to Bladensburg, which I have seen; the other about five miles, on the road to Washington and Piscataway, near the Wood-yard, which I shall examine to-day. The former is represented as unhealthy, during August and September; but possesses all other requisites: the latter is said to be healthy, and unless there should be some considerable deficiency towards the comfort and convenience of a camp, I presume will be preferable; and if upon examination I shall find it eligible, I shall order the 36th and 33th immediately to proceed thither. I am much embarrassed about the situation of

Annapolis: it cannot be defended against a serious attack by land and water, without a large force and many additional works; and yet it appears to me that should the enemy contemplate serious operations in this quarter with any considerable force, it will be of the utmost importance to him to occupy it. With the command of the water an entrenchment of 7 or 800 yards, properly protected by batteries, renders it secure against any attack by land. It furnishes a position in every respect desirable and useful to him for making enterprises against any other point, and a safe retreat against every calamity; in short, it appears to me to be the door to Washington, and it is not possible for us to shut it with our present means. Fort Madison, besides its exposed and defenceless situation, except from an approach direct by water, is so very unhealthy during the months of August and September, that it is not possible to keep a garrison in it. It is provided with two 50 lb. columbiads, two 24 lbs. two 18 lbs. one 12 and one 6 lbs. These guns will be exposed to certain capture if they are left there, and will be turned against the town and fort Severn, with decisive effect, unless we can find the means of making a substantial defence of the place.

It appears to me that these guns should be removed and the post mined ready to be blown up whenever an attack of the town may be contemplated. I cannot, however, but again remark the importance of the place to the enemy, in every point of view, renders it of the last importance to be defended, if the means can be obtained. But a considerable force ought to be instantly sent there to prepare the works necessary to give a chance of successful defence. On my arrival here last evening, I learned that an express had passed through this place to the governor of Maryland; who stated that he was the bearer of information, that two 74's with a number of small vessels had made their appearance near the mouth of the Potomac. It is of importance that I obtain the

earliest intelligence, if this be true, and I beg if you have any intelligence worthy of attention that you would communicate it to me here without delay. By the return of the express to Point Look-out, I shall write to the person employed there to give intelligence, and direct him to transmit me by express intelligence of all the movements of the enemy. I shall also establish express lines from all the prominent points of observation on the bay, unless these may be already established, of which I beg you to inform me. The governor and council of Maryland have taken steps immediately to comply with the requisition of the general government; but I fear, from my recent experience, it will be in vain to look for any efficient aid upon a sudden call upon the militia.

(Signed)

W. H. WINDER,
Brig. Gen. com'g. 10th M. D.

Hon. John Armstrong, secretary of war,

NOTTINGHAM, July 17, 1814.

SIR,

We have information deemed credible here, that the enemy are advancing up this river in considerable force.

I have called the detachment of regulars to this place, who will be here to-morrow. The alarm is going out to assemble what militia force can be collected; and I take the liberty of suggesting the propriety of sending to this point, with the utmost expedition, the marine corps and all the militia force that can be procured from the district.

Yours respectfully,

(Signed)

WM. H. WINDER,
Brig. gen. com'g. 10th M. D.

Hon. Secretary of war,

ANNAPOLIS, July 20, 1814.

SIR,

Your letter of the 17th reached me on the 18th. The enemy proceeded no further up the Patuxent than Hunting creek, where he landed and committed some depredations in Calvert county. He has since returned down the river, leaving us in doubt where he will next appear. I in consequence halted the three companies of city volunteers at the Woodyard, and the detachments of the 36th and 38th at Upper Marlborough, until some further indication shall be made by the enemy.

I have seized this moment to proceed to this place to arrange the calling the Maryland militia demanded by the requisition of the 4th instant. This will be immediately attended to by the governor of this state. I have deemed it adviseable to call for the highest number directed by the president, supposing that by this means we might possibly get the lowest.

I shall immediately proceed to Baltimore to see and understand the means of defence there, to make the necessary arrangements and orders. I shall leave this to-morrow afternoon or next day morning at farthest (unless some movement of the enemy renders it unnecessary) and proceed to the country between Potomac and Patuxent.

I am, very respectfully, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed)

WM. H. WINDER.

Brig. gen. com'g. 10th M. D.

*Hon. General John Armstrong,
Secretary of War.*

N. B. The governor informs me that it will not be in his power to supply the arms, camp equipage, &c. to the quota. The requisition already made and

expected for local defence have exhausted the state arsenal.

I have delayed dismantling fort Madison only because it will excite greater sensation and clamor, and by that means proclaim to the enemy, that it was not to be or could not be defended, and thus invite him to take possession of it. It would be impossible to dismantle it without making it public, and I have deemed it more expedient to risk the loss of the guns there, than by removing them, invite the enemy to take the place, which he may possibly abstain from while he supposes the place will be defended.

(Signed) W. H. W.

UPPER MARLBOROUGH, July 23, 1814.

SIR,

I avail myself of a suspension of the enemy's movements to proceed to Annapolis and Baltimore, to attend to the militia calls on Maryland. I returned here yesterday at 2 o'clock. The governor has issued orders for calling out three thousand of the drafts, under the requisition of the 4th of July, and, at my suggestion, has appointed Bladensburg as the place of rendezvous. I preferred this place because it was near the proposed line of defence and contiguous to the supplies which Washington can afford. It will be necessary that arms, ammunition, accoutrements, tents and camp equipage, be deposited there for them. I have no knowledge where these articles are in store, nearest that point, nor under whose charge they are. I must pray you give the necessary orders for having the requisite deposits made at that place. I have notified the contractor.

The 2,000 militia called from general Smith's division and who are to rendezvous near Baltimore, will, I believe, need no supplies but provision and ammunition from the United States. Upon these points I have taken orders. I fear some time will elapse before either of these requisitions can be complied with, in having the men assembled, especially the former, the draft being yet to be made. Major Marsteller, if not too much occupied at Washington, ought to be with me in the field; but his duties will call him probably to so many different points that it appears to me he will require an assistant. The enemy's force is divided between the Potomac and Patuxent. The accounts which ought most to be credited give 500 as having landed from the Patuxent squadron, and from 1,000 to 1,500 from the Potomac squadron, and although, from repeated experience, we are forbid to rely on this intelligence, yet, as it is the only direct intelligence we have, and comes from respectable people having had opportunities of observation, it cannot be wholly disregarded. I shall therefore, for the present, still retain the city volunteers and keep them and the regulars in a post of observation and readiness. I shall myself proceed nearer the enemy for the purpose of better information and observation.

As I do not know whether only the quota of the district militia is to be drafted and placed at my disposal, or whether, on occasion, they are all considered as liable to requisition, I would thank you for information on that subject. As that part of the Pennsylvania militia, assigned for my district, are remote and could not be called out upon emergency, might it not be expedient to draw from remotest points, leaving that portion of the militia nearest the probable scene of action to be called out on the spur of the occasion? A deserter from the British, whose examination I have seen, says they talk of attacking Annapolis. If they know their own interest and our weakness, in

fact incapacity, to defend that point, they certainly will possess it.

I have the honor to be,

With very great respect,

Sir, your obedient servant,

W. H. WINDER,

Brig. gen. com'g. 10th M. D.

Hon. John Armstrong,
secretary of war.

WOODYARD, July 23d, 1814.

SIR,

Since I wrote you this morning, I have, under all circumstances, deemed it expedient to direct captain Davidson to return to Washington with his detachment of volunteers.

The facility with which they can turn out and proceed to any point, renders them nearly as effective as if actually kept in the field; and the importance to them individually of attending to their private affairs, decides me, even in the doubt of the enemy's probable movements, to give this order.

I take the liberty of suggesting, upon the information of capt. Doughty, that the rifles they have are very defective for service; and it would be useful, especially at the present moment, if they could be supplied with better. Capt. Burch's artillery are also without swords. Whether both those articles are supplied to the militia of the district by the government, I know not; but if they are and can be, the probable demand for the services of the militia of the district, and their importance in the scale of our force, would render it desirable they should be supplied.

I beg leave also to suggest, upon the information of the commanding officers of companies, that if the

tents and camp equipage were respectively left under their charge, it would enable them to march, when called upon, with much greater promptitude.

I have the honor to be,
With very great respect,
Sir,

Your obedient servant,

WM. H. WINDER,
Brig. Gen. comm'g 10th M. D.

*Hon. John Armstrong, Secretary of War,
Washington City.*

WARBURTON, near Fort Washington,
July 25th, 1814.

SIR,

From the inclosed representation of lieutenant Edwards, and my own observation in confirmation thereof, fort Washington is in several respects incomplete in its state of preparation for defence. If the 18 pound columbiads are not mounted even in the block-house, ammunition ought to be sent down for them and the 18 pounders on the water battery. Lieut. Edwards will send a requisition for the quantity and kind of ammunition necessary. Can colonel Wadsworth, or the proper department at Washington, have the platform enlarged? which will be necessary to render the battery of the fort effectual.

I shall proceed down as far as Port Tobacco to-day.

I am with very great respect,
Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

WM. H. WINDER,
Brig. Gen. comm'g 10th M. D.

*Hon. John Armstrong, Secretary of War,
Washington City.*

Report of Lieutenant Edwards.

FORT WASHINGTON, July 25, 1814.

SIR,

I deem it my duty to report to you the defenceless situation of this post. The necessity of mounting heavy artillery in the block house, is apparent to every military character, who is acquainted with the ground adjacent to the works. It is true a few eighteen pound columbiads have been sent here, but there are no means to enable us to mount them: we are destitute of a gin and tackle. The width of the platform in the fort is another subject upon which frequent representations (I understand) were made to general Bloomfield, but without effect. The depth of platforms for heavy pieces is generally from three to four toises, but seldom less than three. The width of this is but fourteen feet, very little more than two toises: at the first discharge of our heavy guns, I have known them to recoil to the hurtoirs. When they are heated they would undoubtedly run over it, and thus be rendered useless for a time.

On the water battery there are mounted five excellent long eighteen pounders (ship guns) but there is not a pound of ammunition for them. In case of an attack by water, the utility of these guns would soon be discovered. In defending ourselves against maritime attacks, it is of the first importance to have a battery near the level of the water, so as to strike the hull of the ship in a horizontal line; for the chance of hitting the object is much greater than when firing from an elevation; when it is only an intersection of the line of fire by the line of the surface that the ball can strike a ship's hull. In the first case the gunner has only to move his piece horizontally; in the other he must combine his direction with those of his elevation and the progress of the ship.

Some of the gun carriages in the fort are in bad order, but not so much so as to render them unserviceable. You will perceive by this morning's report,

which I enclose, what is the strength of my force: those reported sick are invalids; those on extra duty, are men employed in the bake-house, garden, &c. and who are from bodily defects incapable of guard duty, but would be serviceable in an action.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed)

JAMES L. EDWARDS,
Lt. com'dg. fort Washington.

Colonel Wadsworth's Report.

A couple of hands were ordered from Greenleaf's point, on Monday, to execute the necessary repairs of the gun carriages at fort Washington. The platform is undoubtedly too narrow as well as the parapet, but I think lieutenant Edwards is mistaken in representing it to be but 14 feet. It was directed to be made 20 or 22 feet, if I do not misrecollect. The disadvantage of too narrow a platform may be obviated, with no great difficulty, by checking the recoil of the piece by means of an elastic handspike introduced between the spokes of the wheels to prevent them from turning. The defect of an insufficient parapet is not so easily obviated. It would be adviseable I think, at a proper time, to make a new wall in front, 15 or 12 feet in advance of the present, which would give sufficient extent, as well for the platform as parapet, without disturbing the magazine, &c. The whole original design was bad, and it is therefore impossible to make a perfect work of it by any alterations.

200 rounds of shot and cartridges for 18 lbs. can be sent down if thought proper. I directed some grape shot for the 18 pound columbiads to be prepared long ago. A tackle and fall, to mount those guns in the block-house, will be provided.

Captain Marstellar, whom I have just seen, informs me there was a good tackle and fall at fort Washington when he left there. He says the platform was made above 20 feet wide.

(Signed)

D. WADSWORTH.

PORT TOBACCO, July 26, 1814.

SIR,

From the uniform train of information yesterday the enemy are descending both the Potomac and the Patuxent. I cannot, however, rely implicitly on the intelligence. I expect more certain intelligence this morning. I expect the enemy will move up the bay next, and I shall not be surprised to find Annapolis his object, which, I fear, would fall before 500 men. As soon as I am certain of the movements of the enemy, I shall return to Marlborough and thence as circumstances may require.

What prospect of the cavalry from Carlisle, and the detachment from Virginia? I have received intelligence of neither.

I am, very respectfully,

Sir, your obedient servant,

WM. H. WINDER,
Brig. gen. commanding 10th M. D.

*Hon. John Armstrong,
secretary of war.*

PISCATAWAY, July 27th, 1814.

SIR,

I returned to this place from Port Tobacco this morning.

One of the enemy's frigates, the Loire, it is said, passed through the kettle bottoms, but returned, the day before yesterday, to Clement's bay, where two 74's still remain. I have not obtained information where the remainder of the fleet are. If there are any of their vessels in the Patuxent, they are at or near the mouth of the river. I expect to hear of them next up the bay. I shall go on immediately to Marl-

borough, where, or near it, I shall remain until the movements of the enemy may call me away.

Gen. Stuart has a very considerable force at or near Cedar-point; col. Beall has his regiment and a troop of cavalry at Port Tobacco; and col. Bowie with his regiment is at Nottingham; the regulars under my command are at Marlborough, between the enemy and any possible approach to Washington. The governor is exerting himself to collect a force at Annapolis.

I have employed myself without intermission in examining the country, and have acquired a knowledge of its topography, which will be extremely useful to me.

I should have proceeded lower down had the enemy's force up the rivers Potomac or Patuxent.... but the retrograde movements on both the rivers induces me to suppose they will proceed to some other point, and I return to Marlborough, to be ready whenever he may appear.

I have heard nothing as yet of the dragoons from Carlisle, or the detachments of infantry from Virginia. Are there not enough recruits of the 36th and 38th, to form a company each? If either have 50 men, would it not be adviseable to organize and order them to join?

This will be delivered you by major Stuart, who goes by the way of Washington, will join me at Marlborough, and take any commands you may have for me.

I am, with very great respect,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

WM. H. WINDER,
Brig. Gen. comm'g 10th M. D.

*Hon. John Armstrong, Secretary of War,
Washington City.*

PISCATAWAY, July 27th, 1814.

SIR,

In the third paragraph of my letter just finished, and which will accompany this, I have used general expressions relative to the force, in order that, should it be deemed adviseable to use any information I have communicated to tranquillize the morbid sensibility of the people of the district, no injurious disclosure may be made....and I add a more specific account of the force in a separate letter for your information.

Gen. Stuart states his force at 800; col. Beall has 300 to 350, and 40 dragoons; col. Bowie has, I presume, 300. The governor has been, in vain, endeavoring to assemble the neighboring militia at Annapolis; he had called on Frederick county, and some militia were coming in from thence, when I last was at Annapolis. All this force is, however, called out by the authority of the state laws, and is not under my command. But they do and will co-operate toward the general defence.

I am, &c. &c.

WM. H. WINDER,
*Brig. Gen.**Hon. J. Armstrong, Secretary of War.*

PORT TOBACCO, August 1, 1814.

SIR,

I learn this morning, in a manner which leaves me no doubt of the fact, that the enemy have retired down near to the mouth of the river, if he has not left it, with all his ships. A rumor, not so well authenticated, but very probable, states the force in the Patuxent to be increased and ascending that river.

I have halted the detachment under lieut. colonel Scott, at Piscataway, where they will wait until some

ascertained movement of the enemy shall render it necessary for them to move to some other point.

I shall see gen. Stuart, of the militia, this morning, and then be able to speak more decidedly.

I am, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

WM. H. WINDER,
Brig. Gen. comm'g.

Hon. J. Armstrong, Secretary of War.

BALTIMORE, August 13, 1814.

SIR,

In consequence of the two regiments which were drafted from general Smith's division, under the requisition of April last, being accepted as part of the quota of Maryland, under the requisition of the 4th of July last, of the impracticability, besides impropriety of calling any portion of those drafted from the eastern shore, and the necessity of leaving all the men immediately upon the bay and low down upon the rivers for local defence on the western shore, the remaining portion of the Maryland drafts to be assembled at Bladensburgh, instead of being three thousand will not much exceed as many hundred. I shall require the governor to order out all the drafts that can possibly be spared from the three lower brigades on the western shore; but since the whole number drafted on the western shore, exclusive of those drawn from general Smith's division, do not amount to fifteen hundred, I apprehend that after all shall be assembled, under this second order from the governor of Maryland, they will not exceed one thousand men. The most convenient and immediate resource to supply this deficiency, which occurs to me, will be to take the militia drawn out under the state

authority and now assembled at Annapolis, to the amount of one thousand men, into the service of the United States, and to call on the governor of Pennsylvania for one regiment. This would make the militia force (independent of the two regiments near this place) under my command between two and three thousand men, and would complete the views of the president in the order communicated to me by you, to call for not more than three nor less than two thousand over and above the two regiments here.

The objects for which the militia were called to Annapolis were such as to make it proper that the force should be under the direction of the commander of the 10th military district. Some force ought and must be kept at Annapolis, and if it should be deemed proper to authorize me to accept them, I should leave them there until some necessity occurred requiring them elsewhere; and the trouble and expense of advancing a detachment there would be avoided.

These men are only called out for sixty days, which may perhaps be long enough, and will, at all events, afford sufficient time to ascertain whether a further force will be necessary. They are already in the field, equipped in all respects and organized. A saving of their equipments will be gained by the United States, and all the time and trouble of calling a force in their place.

I shall proceed for Bladensburg and Washington to-morrow or the day following.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect, sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. H. WINDER,
Brig. gen. com'g. 10th M. D.

Hon. J. Armstrong, secretary of war.

WAR DEPARTMENT, August 22, 1814.

DEAR GENERAL,

Your letter of the 21st is received.

Of the force in the Potomac we do not know as much as we ought. Their fleet is said to consist of six frigates, one of which had got aground on the kettle bottoms. They have on board some troops or marines which had been previously encamped on St. George's island. General Parker is observing them on the Virginia side of the river, at the head of a small brigade of militia, about fourteen or fifteen hundred.

Enclosed is a letter from general Douglass, of London. I have ordered him to come on directly without seeking a rendezvous with general Hungerford. A detachment of the 12th infantry (recruits) arrived here yesterday. They shall be armed, equipped and marched to the Woodyard this morning. The Baltimore brigade will be at Bladensburg to-day. Would it not be well to throw Barney's seamen (600) and some other troops on the right of Nottingham? A demonstration which shall menace the rear of the enemy and their communication with the shipping, will, if it does not actually stop, at least very much retard their progress.

I am, sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

*Brigadier general Winder,
Long Old Fields, Prince Georges, Md.*

Copy of a letter from general Winder to the secretary of war, dated

WASHINGTON CITY, August 19, 1814.

SIR,

I beg leave to suggest, through you, for the consideration of the president, the following propositions :

Would it be expedient, under the direction of the navy department, to have vessels ready to be sunk in the Potomac, at fort Washington, or other proper point, at a moments warning, to obstruct the navigation ?

Would it not be proper to put all the boats, which can be propelled by oars, that are at this place, under the controul of the navy department, at fort Washington, to transport troops across the river from either side as circumstances may require ?

Would it not be expedient, in our present destitute condition for military force, to put the marine corps into service, or at all events to cause them to be ready to reinforce fort Washington at a moments notice, or to be applied, as circumstances require, to any point of defence ?

From the great and overwhelming force of the enemy on water, it is no longer useful to keep the flotilla armed in the Patuxent ; might not that force be applied to some stationary point of defence on land, or be subjected in some way to co-operate in the general arrangements which the commander of the district may make ?

Serious difficulties have already arisen from collision in the Patapsco with the command of fort M^cHenry and the flotilla, in performing the duty of guard and look-out, the flotilla boat having stopped and kept in custody all night the look-out boat of the fort.

Would it be adviseable for the commander of the district, or any other public authority, to make an an-

peal to the patriotism of the country at the present moment for volunteers, without regard to their legal obligations as militia men? A large force very useful might be obtained, probably in this way, which would cost only provision and ammunition. In fine, would it not be adviseable, without regard to forms too slow for the emergency, to invite and call in every man that can be found? This is, perhaps, more expedient, because I have received official information that the Pennsylvania militia are not in a state to be called out legally; the former law having expired the 1st of July, and the law of last session not taking effect as to organization till October next. I take this occasion to state that I have called for the militia of the district of Columbia, en masse; for general West's brigade in Prince George's county, and general Williams, of Anne Arundel, also en masse, and the Baltimore brigades also en masse. I shall forward by expresses immediately, demands for 500 men each from all the brigades on the western shore of Maryland and the counties which border the Potomac on the Virginia side. General Hungerford, Northern Neck, has a force in the field which I have called on him to march without delay to this place. The result of all these operations will be certainly slow and extremely doubtful as to the extent of force produced.

Most respectfully,

(Signed)

W. H. WINDER,
Brig. gen. com'g. 10th M. D.

Hon. Secretary of War.

WASHINGTON, August 21, 1814.

SIR,

The calls which have been made upon the militia officers and the appeals to the people to turn out is likely to produce in haste an uncertain force in its

amount and armament; probably very considerable in numbers. I beg leave, therefore, to suggest the propriety of augmenting the quantity of arms immediately at this place or its vicinity; perhaps Foxall's works would be a good and safe depot and sufficiently convenient. They can be drawn by immediate exertions in sufficient time. All the flints that the utmost efforts can produce, ought to be collected here without delay.

I am, &c. &c.

W. H. WINDER.

Hon. J. Armstrong, Secretary of war.

HEAD-QUARTERS, COMB'S,

Near the Eastern-branch bridge,
Wednesday morning, 24th of August, 1814.

SIR,

I have found it necessary to establish my headquarters here, the most advanced position convenient to the troops, and nearest information. I shall remain stationary as much as possible, that I may be the more readily found, to issue orders, and collect together the various detachments of militia, and give them as rapid a consolidation and organization as possible.

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

WM. H. WINDER,

Brig. Gen. comm'g 10th M. D.

Hon. Secretary of War.

P. S.—The news up the river is very threatening. Barney's or some other force should occupy the batteries at Greenleaf's point and navy-yard. I should be glad of the assistance of counsel from yourself and the government. If more convenient, I should make an exertion to go to you the first opportunity.

NOTE.—The following memorandum was endorsed on the back of the foregoing letter, in the handwriting of secretary Armstrong :

“Went to gen. Winder; found there the president; Mr. Monroe had also been there, but had set out to Bladensburg, to arrange the troops, and give them an order of battle, as I understood; saw no necessity for ordering Barney to Greenleaf’s point or navy-yard. Advised the commodore to join the army at Bladensburg, and ordered Minor’s regiment to that place. Advised gen. Winder to leave Barney and the Baltimore brigade upon the enemy’s rear and right flank, while he put himself in front with all the rest of his force. Repeated this idea in my letter to him of the 22d.”

BALTIMORE, August 27, 1814.

SIR,

When the enemy arrived at the mouth of Potomac, of all the militia which I had been authorized to assemble there were but about 1,700 in the field, from thirteen to fourteen hundred under general Stansbury near this place, and about two hundred and fifty at Bladensburg, under lieut. col. Kramer; the slow progress of draft, and the imperfect organization, with the ineffectiveness of the laws to compel them to turn out, rendered it impossible to have procured more.

The militia of this state, and of the contiguous parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania, were called on en masse, but the former militia law of Pennsylvania had expired the first of June or July, and the one adopted in its place is not to take effect in organizing the militia before October. No aid therefore has been received from that state.

After all the force that could be put at my disposal in that short time, and making such dispositions as I

deemed best calculated to present the most respectable force at whatever point the enemy might strike, I was enabled, by the most active and harrassing movements of the troops, to interpose before the enemy at Bladensburg, about five thousand men, including three hundred and fifty regulars and commodore Barney's command. Much the largest portion of this force arrived on the ground when the enemy were in sight, and were disposed to support in the best manner the position which general Stansbury had taken. They had barely reached the ground before the action commenced, which was about one o'clock, P. M. of the 24th instant, and continued about an hour.

The contest was not as obstinately maintained as could have been desired, but was by parts of the troops sustained with great spirit and with prodigious effect, and had the whole of our force been equally firm, I am induced to believe that the enemy would have been repulsed notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which we fought. The artillery from Baltimore, supported by major Pinkney's rifle battalion and a part of captain Doughty's from the navy yard, were in advance to command the pass of the bridge at Bladensburg, and played upon the enemy, as I have since learned, with very destructive effect; but the rifle troops were obliged after some time to retire and of course artillery. Superior numbers, however, rushed upon them and made their retreat necessary, not however without great loss on the part of the enemy. Major Pinkney received a severe wound in his right arm, after he had retired to the left flank of Stansbury's brigade. The right and centre of Stansbury's brigade, consisting of lieutenant colonel Ragan's and Shutez's regiments, generally gave way very soon afterwards, with the exception of about forty rallied by colonel Ragan, after having lost his horse and a whole or a part of captain Trower's company, both of whom general Stansbury re-

presents to have made, even thus deserted, a gallant stand. The fall which lieutenant colonel Ragan received from his horse, together with his great efforts to sustain his position, rendered him unable to follow the retreat; we have, therefore, to lament that this gallant and excellent officer has been taken prisoner: he has, however, been paroled, and I met him here recovering from the bruises occasioned by his fall. The loss of his services at this moment is serious. The 5th Baltimore regiment under lieutenant colonel Sterret, being the left of brigadier general Stansbury's brigade, still, however, stood their ground, and except for a moment, when part of them recoiled a few steps, remained firm and stood until ordered to retreat with a view to prevent them from being out flanked.

The reserve under brigadier general Smith, of the district of Columbia, with the militia of the city and Georgetown, with the regulars and some detachments of Maryland militia, flanked on their right by commodore Barney and his brave fellows, and lieutenant colonel Beall, still were to the right on the hill and maintained the contest for some time with great effect.

It is not with me to report the conduct of commodore Barney and his command, nor can I speak from observation, being too remote; but the concurrent testimony of all who did observe them, does them the highest justice for their brave resistance, and the destructive effect they produced on the enemy. Commodore Barney, after having lost his horse, took post near one of his guns, and there unfortunately received a severe wound in the thigh, and he also fell into the hands of the enemy.

Captain Miller, of marines, was wounded in the arm fighting bravely; from the best intelligence there remains but little doubt that the enemy lost at least four hundred killed and wounded, and of these a very unusual portion killed. Our loss cannot, I think.

be estimated at more than from thirty to forty killed, and fifty or sixty wounded.

You will readily understand that it is impossible for me to speak minutely of the merit or demerit of particular troops so little known to me from their recent and hasty assemblage. My subsequent movements, for the purpose of preserving as much of my force as possible, gaining reinforcements and protecting this place, you already know.

I am, with very great respect,

Sir, your obedient servant,

WM. H. WINDER,

Brig. gen. com'g. 10th M. D.

P. S. We have to lament that captain Sterret, of the 5th Baltimore regiment, has also been wounded, but is doing well; other officers no doubt deserve notice, but I am as yet unable to particularize.

Hon. J. Armstrong, secretary of war.

*General Order erecting 10th Military district,
and letters from the Secretary of War to ge-
neral Winder.*

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Adj. and Insp. Gen. Office,

2d of July, 1814.

GENERAL ORDERS.

The state of Maryland, the district of Columbia, and that part of Virginia lying between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers, will constitute a separate military district (No. 10) under the command of brig. gen. Winder.

By order,

JNO. R. BELL,

Asst. Insp. Gen.

WAR DEPARTMENT, July 2d, 1814.

SIR,

Your letters of the 30th instant, have been received.

Inclosed is an order constituting a new military district, and assigning you to the command thereof. Major Stewart has permission to serve in your staff. It would be desirable to see you here as soon as it may be convenient for you to come.

I am, very respectfully,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

*Brig. Gen. Wm. H. Winder,
Baltimore.*

WAR DEPARTMENT, July 18th, 1814.

SIR,

In addition to my circular letter of the 4th inst. which subjects to your call the quota of Maryland militia, you are also authorized to draw from that of Virginia 2000 men, and from the quota of Pennsylvania 5000. The whole of the militia of the district of Columbia, amounting to about 2000, is kept in a disposable state, and subject to your orders.

Note.—The detached militia of Maryland amounted to 6000.

I am, very respectfully,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Brig. Gen. Winder.

WAR DEPARTMENT, July 28, 1814.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 25th and 27th instant.

Lieut. Edwards's representation is referred to col. Wadsworth, with orders to supply what may be wanting at fort Washington. Lieut. colonel Lavall states that he is waiting the arrival of horses. The detachment of the 10th is in march, and the recruits of the 36th and 38th ordered to join their corps. They I fear are very few.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Brig. Gen. Winder, comm'g 10th M. D.

WAR DEPARTMENT, August 19th, 1814.

SIR,

Your letter of this date has been received, and submitted to the president. On the two first subjects, you are referred to the navy department. The marines are ordered to move. Orders have been given to commodore Barney.

You will adjust with the secretary of the navy what relates to guard and vidette duty at Baltimore.

The call you propose making on volunteers is approved. It will be so worded as to guard against interfering with the legal draft, and putting it in the electing of the militia to fulfil or not to fulfil their public engagements.

The calls you have actually made are also approved.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Brig. Gen. Winder.

WAR DEPARTMENT, Aug. 19, 1814.

SIR,

If the enemy's movements indicate an attack on this place, means should be taken to drive off all horses and cattle, and remove all supplies of forage, &c. on their route; a moment is not to be lost in doing both. For this purpose, the whole of your cavalry may be pushed into the neighborhood of the enemy without delay.

Colonel M'Lean could be usefully employed with them. Lavall will be at Montgomery court-house to-day: he has with him 130 mounted dragoons, under excellent officers.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your ob't servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Brig. Gen. Winder.

*Correspondence with the Governors of Pennsylvania,
Maryland and Virginia.*

Circular to the governors of states.

WAR DEPARTMENT, July 4, 1814.

SIR,

The late pacification in Europe offers to the enemy a large disposable force, both naval and military, and with it the means of giving to the war here, a character of new and increased activity and extent.

Without knowing with certainty, that such will be its application, and still less that any particular point or points will become objects of attack, the president has deemed it adviseable, as a measure of precaution, to strengthen ourselves on the line of the Atlantic, and (as the principal means of doing this will be found in the militia) to invite the executives of certain states to organize and hold in readiness for immediate service, a corps of 93,500 men, under the laws of the 28th of February, 1795, and 18th of April, 1814.

The inclosed detail will show your excellency what, under this requisition, will be the quota of

As far as volunteer uniform companies can be found, they will be preferred.

The expediency of regarding (as well in the designations of the militia as of their places of rendezvous) the points, the importance or exposure of which will be most likely to attract the views of the enemy, need but be suggested.

A report of the organization of your quota, when completed, and of its place or places of rendezvous, will be acceptable.

I have the honor to be,

With very great respect,

Your excellency's most obedient,

And very humble servant,

His excellency the governor of

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, July 14, 1814.

SIR,

In the absence of the governor, I deem it my duty to inform you that your communication containing a requisition for a detachment of 14,000 Pennsylvania militia, came to the office this morning and was immediately forwarded by express to the governor, at Selin's Grove. Be assured the requisition will be met with all the promptness the circumstances possibly will permit.

With high considerations of respect,

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

N. B. BOILEAU,

Secretary.

John Armstrong, esqr. secretary of war.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, July 25, 1814.

SIR,

The governor has directed me to inclose to you copies of general orders issued by him in compliance with a late requisition for a military force from Pennsylvania, by the president, communicated by yours under date of the 4th inst. He has not, as you will perceive, designated places of rendezvous: he thinks it will be in time to do so in subsequent orders, which must issue before the troops can march: the threatened point of attack by the enemy will, it is probable, then be better ascertained, and a more prudent selection of place can be made. The repeal of our militia law of 1807, and its several supplements, on the 1st of August next; the disannulling of all militia commissions on that day, by a new law of the last session, granted under the old law, except the commissions of such officers as may then be in actual service; the ordering by the new law; the holding of elections of officers by the militia, after the said 1st of August; the notice of election; re-

turns to be made ; and the protracting to the 4th Monday of October next the classification of the militia ; causes an almost total disorganization of our militia system, between the 1st of August and the 4th of October, and presents difficulties, in yielding perfect compliance with the requisition of the president, insurmountable. It is hoped, however, that the patriotism of the people will obviate the difficulty, by a voluntary tender of services, which the governor has invited, growing out of the unaccountable oversight of the legislature. It is strongly doubted whether any orders can be enforced under the present state of things.

The requisition refers to the act of Congress passed 28th of February, 1795 ; under which militia can be held in service three months only ; and to the law of 1814, which authorized the president to keep them six months in service. The law of Pennsylvania, passed at the last session of its legislature, requires the governor to mention in general orders the period for which any militia ordered into service is to remain on duty. It is desirable, therefore, to know whether the requisition is intended for three or six months service. The offices of deputy quarter master general and assistants, and assistant adjutant generals, are not recognized by our state laws.

I have taken the liberty of inclosing to you a copy of the militia law of this state, passed at the last session of the legislature ; from a perusal of which you will perceive the difficulties under which the executive at present labors, in attempting to comply with the requisition.

With high considerations of respect,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

N. B. BOILEAU,

Secretary.

John Armstrong, esq. Secretary of War.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE,

August 27, 1814.

SIR,

I am directed by the governor to inclose to you a copy of general orders issued yesterday. The letter of general Winder containing the requisition, under date of the 18th instant, was not received until the evening of the twenty-third. The deranged state of our militia system prevented a more prompt compliance with the demand. To obviate as far as practicable the inconvenience of delay, the governor has directed the flank and volunteer companies to push on as rapidly as possible, without any regard to the time fixed on for the general rendezvous of the ordinary drafts. The commanding officers of the companies or detachments are instructed to report themselves and the number of their men to general Winder, as the officer who may have command of the troops in the service of the United States, in the 10th military district.

The tents, camp-equipage, as well as arms and accoutrements belonging to the state, being insufficient to accommodate the troops called into service, the governor relies on the deficiency being supplied by the United States as promptly as practicable, to render the men comfortable and efficient.

With high respect and esteem,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

N. B. BOILEAU, *Sec'y.*

*John Armstrong, esquire,
Secretary of War.*

ANNAPOLIS, July 29, 1814.

SIR,

In conformity to the request of the president of United States, signified in your communication of the 4th instant, a detachment of 5,400 infantry, and 600 artillery, was directed to be organized and held in readiness to march at the shortest notice, and in consequence of general Winder having by direction of the president requested 3,000 of the drafts of the militia of this state may be called into the field, and in order to comply as fully as practicable with the request, the whole of the drafts from the militia of the Western shore, being about 3,500 infantry, have been ordered to be embodied. You will observe by the map and line drawn from Washington to Baltimore, (not far east of which I presume these men will be encamped) will have a very considerable portion of the militia between that line and the bay shore; and consequently, I presume the drafts from this section of the country would not be drawn back from that part most exposed. Baltimore, I fear, will be unwilling that any part of that force from which they expected to derive aid, should be withdrawn from them. Under these circumstances, it was thought most prudent to order the whole. They have been directed to be embodied in their several brigade districts, and move on the shortest route to Bladensburg, where I presume, on the receipt of this information, arrangements will be made (under your directions) for their accommodation. What number will arrive there in any given time, I am as yet not advised of. The whole artillery of the state does not amount to more than 900; and more than two thirds of that number are in Baltimore, consequently the proportion from thence would be more than 400. So great a proportion, or any thing like it, being taken from what is their most efficient force, would create great uneasiness. The order

therefore with respect to them is suspended until general Smith can have some communication with you.

I am, sir,

With great respect, yours, &c.

LEVIN WINDER.

Hon. secretary of war.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

Richmond, 14th July 1814.

SIR,

Your requisition on the militia of this state, bearing date the 4th instant, has been received.

Apprehending that the object of this measure is to have in readiness a provisional force to repel a sudden invasion, I have enclosed the general orders from this department of the 22d ultimo, placing in a state of preparation for such an event, upwards of fifteen thousand men. They are not organized, other than on the plan of the militia generally, but you will perceive that the points of rendezvous are designated. In addition to this force, the 8th and a greater part of the 9th brigade (amounting to 7,000, and all convenient to Norfolk) are placed in the same situation, and directed to co-operate with general Porter in resisting an attack on Norfolk.

Arms, ammunition, &c. will be placed in the hands of the whole. Should these arrangements meet your views, it will be unnecessary to make a detail on all the regiments in the state, for the twelve thousand called for; unless it is desirable that this number be set apart to perform a regular tour of duty. But as the troops now in readiness are adequate to the emergency contemplated, and the requisitions for those that are to perform regular duty will be made in future in time for every preparation to be made, it is

believed that the object of your requisition has been anticipated. If this is the fact, his excellency the governor is desirous that the regiments now held in requisition and subject to be called out *en masse*, be considered by you as a provisional force only, and not subject to perform service beyond the continuance of the emergency, which may call them into the field.

As concert in the measures of the general and state government is all important, permit me earnestly to solicit your earliest attention to this subject. In the mean time arrangements will be made to take our quota from the militia, generally, as that measure cannot be avoided under existing circumstances, unless the force required be provisional.

Rest assured, sir, that nothing will be wanting on the part of this state, to co-operate cordially and effectually with the general government.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

CLAIBORNE W. GOOCH,

Deputy adjutant general.

*The honorable John Armstrong,
secretary of war.*

WAR DEPARTMENT, July 18, 1814.

SIR,

A letter of the 14th instant, from deputy adjutant general Gooch, inclosing a copy of your general orders of the 22d ultimo, and requesting to know whether the corps put into requisition by these orders would not supply the call of the 4th instant, made through this department on the state of Virginia, has been received and submitted to the president. In re-

ply thereto, I am instructed to state, that in as much as the service of the militia required by your excellency, is declared to be provisional, limited in point of time to the emergency that calls it forth, and in point of place to the state of Virginia, and not subjected to the direction of any officer of the United States, it cannot be considered as fulfilling the views of the president.

Permit me to take this occasion to state to your excellency, that two thousand of the quota of Virginia will be put at the disposition of general Winder as commanding officer of this district.

I have the honor to be

Your excellency's

Most obedient servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

His excellency the governor of Virginia.

No. 7.

Narrative of general Winder.

O'NEALE'S, Sept. 26, 1814.

SIR,

The readiest mode in which I can meet the inquiries which you have made, on behalf of the committee of which you are the chairman, will be to give a narrative of my agency as commander of the 10th military district, and to accompany it with the correspondence which I have had, by letter, with the general and state governments and their respective officers while in that command.

Within the few last days of June, and before it was known that my exchange was perfect, although intelligence to that effect was momentarily expected, I was at the city of Washington, and the secretary of war informed me that it was in contemplation to create another military district to embrace the country from the Rappahannock northward to include the state of Maryland, and that the president intended to vest me with the command of it.

On my return to Baltimore I addressed to the secretary of war copies of the letters herewith transmitted marked 1 A, 2 A.

About the 4th or 5th of July I received a letter, a copy of which, marked 1 B, accompanies this, which inclosed an order constituting the 10th military district, a copy of which is annexed to the letter above referred to.

In obedience to the requisition of the letter I immediately went to Washington and waited on the secretary of war. He stated to me that, in addition to the garrisons of the several forts within my district, and the detachments of the 36th and 38th infantry,

then at Benedict, it was contemplated to order a detachment of cavalry then at Carlisle, under orders to be mounted, amounting to about one hundred and fifty, a company of the 12th and from one to two companies of the 10th regular infantry, which would be ordered to be collected from their several recruiting rendezvous and to march to the city of Washington, and that the whole regular force, thus to be collected, might amount to one thousand or twelve hundred, and that the balance of my command would be composed of militia. That a requisition was about to be made upon certain states for upwards of 90,000 militia, intended for the defence of the maritime frontier of the country, and shewed me a blank circular which had been printed but not filled up nor sent to the respective governors of the states.

I took the liberty of suggesting to the secretary of war, at that time, my idea of the propriety of calling immediately into the field at least a portion of the militia intended for my district, and encamping them in the best positions for protecting the probable points at which the enemy would strike if he should invade the district of my command. The secretary was of opinion that the most advantageous mode of using militia was upon the spur of the occasion, and to bring them to fight as soon as called out. I returned within a day or two to Baltimore to prepare myself for visiting the different parts of my district and to explore it generally, and particularly those parts of it which might be considered as the approaches to the three principal points of it, to wit; Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis.

My impressions of the necessity of having a respectable force immediately called into the field were strengthened instead of diminished by subsequent reflection, and I in consequence, on the 9th of July, addressed the letter to the secretary of war, a copy of which is herewith sent marked 3 A.

Agreeably to the suggestion contained in that letter I proceeded to Annapolis to visit the military posts

there and to be ready on the spot, when the governor should receive the requisition and myself such instructions as it might be thought proper to be given me, to take the most immediate steps to accomplish them.

The governor received the requisition and immediately issued the necessary orders to have the quota required drafted.

On the 12th July, the secretary addressed me a letter (the copy of which is herewith marked 2 B,) but which being directed to Baltimore did not reach me until after I had been to Upper Marlborough and again returned to Annapolis, where it followed me. I proceeded from Annapolis to Upper Marlborough, and on the 16th addressed two letters to the secretary of war, of which copies are sent marked 4 A, 5 A.

The apprehension that the enemy would proceed up the Patuxent and attack the flotilla at Nottingham, in consequence of the reinforcement he had just received gaining strength, I proceeded immediately to Nottingham instead of going to the Woodyard as I intended. During the 16th we received no information of a movement of the enemy up the river, but on the 17th, about 9 o'clock, Mr. Fitzhugh arrived express from the mouth of the Patuxent, and stated that about twenty barges, several frigates and some smaller armed vessels were proceeding up the river. I, in consequence, wrote a letter to the secretary of war, a copy of which is herewith sent marked 6 A; and wrote a note to brigadier general West, of the Maryland militia, advising him to call out the militia of the county.

I ordered the detachments of the 36th and 38th to hasten from the head of South river by forced marches to Nottingham. Three companies of the city militia were promptly despatched, in consequence of my letter of the 17th. But by the time these latter had reached the Woodyard, and the regulars Marlborough, the enemy had entered Hunting

creek, on the Calvert side of the river, had proceeded to Hunting town, burned the tobacco warehouse, after having taken off the principal part of the tobacco, and were retiring down the river. I halted the city militia at the Woodyard, and the regulars at Marlborough.

In answer to my letter of the 17th from Nottingham, I received the following answer from the Secretary of war, marked 3 B. As soon therefore as I ascertained that the enemy had retired to the mouth of the Patuxent, I proceeded to Annapolis, to make the requisition upon the governor, as directed by the secretary of war; and thence to Baltimore, to lend my aid and power to draw out the force authorized there. While at Annapolis, I addressed to the secretary of war the letter dated 20th of July, a copy of which is sent, marked 7 A, and at the same time made the requisition on the governor, herewith sent, marked 4 C. After remaining at Baltimore a day, and leaving orders to brig. gen. Stansbury, who had been called on to command the militia to be assembled there, relative to their muster and inspection, under the laws of Congress, I returned to Marlborough, to fix upon an encampment for the militia I had required from the governor, and to be more at hand to be informed of the enemy's movements.

From Upper Marlborough, on the 23d of July, I wrote the secretary of war the accompanying letter marked 8 A; and then proceeded to the Woodyard, from whence, on the same day, I wrote the secretary of war the following letter marked 9 A.

The enemy still remaining inactive, or rather confining himself to depredations upon the lower parts of the rivers Patuxent and Potomac, I seized the opportunity of visiting fort Washington, and on the 25th required from lieut. Edwards, the commanding officer, a representation of what he deemed necessary to complete the equipment of the fort, with its then works, and received from him a representa-

tation, which I inclosed in a letter to the secretary of war on the 25th, of which copies are sent marked 10 A. A copy of his answer, marked 4 B, is herewith sent.

Learning that some of the enemy's ships were proceeding up the Potomac, I proceeded down to Port Tobacco, with a view of ascertaining more precisely his views, and of informing myself of the country; and on the 26th, wrote the secretary of war the following letter marked 11 A.

Having ascertained the next morning, that the enemy's ships had descended the river, I returned to Marlborough, and availed myself of the first opportunity I had, to review and inspect the detachment of the 36th and 38th; and thence proceeded to Washington city, where I established permanent head-quarters of the district on the 1st of August. I availed myself of a day, at this time, to review and inspect the two brigades of district militia, in Alexandria and this place, and reported the result to major general Van Ness, commanding the district militia, in the letter herewith marked No. 1.

The people of St. Mary's and Charles, had become extremely sore, under the harrassing service to which they had been subjected, and the devastation and plunder which the enemy had been so long committing on their shores, and the remonstrances of brig. gen. Stuart, commanding the militia there under the state authority, had become extremely important with both the secretary of war and the president, to receive aid and protection from the general government. The danger of throwing a force so far down into that neck of land, which exposed them to the danger of being cut off, besides that they would be lost for the defence of Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis, had hitherto prevented me from pushing any part of my command so low down. But the president, in conversation, told me, that their situation required aid, and directed me to move the detach-

ments of the 36th and 38th down to unite with and aid gen. Stuart. I accordingly ordered lieut. colonel Scott to move from Marlborough to Piscataway, and I proceeded directly down myself on the 3d. On the morning of the 4th of August, I wrote the following letter from Port Tobacco, marked 13 A, to the secretary of war, and agreeably to the intention therein expressed, proceeded 12 miles below to gen. Stuart's camp. I there learned, beyond doubt, that the enemy had returned down the river; and after assuring the general of support if they again advanced up the river, I returned back again to the city of Washington, directing lieut. col. Scott, commanding the regulars, to take up his encampment at a very convenient place, two miles from Piscataway, on the road to the Woodyard and Marlborough.

On my arrival at Washington I found that the requisition made upon the governor of Maryland, for three thousand men to be assembled at Bladensburg, had brought to that place only one company; but I learned that other detachments were about marching to that place, and in order that no delay might occur in organizing and equipping them, I ordered major Keyser, of the 38th regular infantry, to proceed to Bladensburg to muster, inspect and drill the detachments as they came in.

I thence proceeded to Baltimore to ascertain more precisely the effect of the requisition made on major general Smith for 2,000 from his division: when arrived, I found about 1,200 only assembled. I reviewed and inspected them; and gave brigadier general Stansbury orders to endeavor by the most speedy means to get in the delinquents and absentees.

I had just learned by a letter from the governor of Maryland, and also from general Smith, that upon general Smith's application to the secretary of war he had determined that the 2,000 men now called to Baltimore, and which had been detached under a requisition of the secretary of war directly on gene-

ral Smith of the 20th of April, were to be considered as part of the quota of Maryland, under the requisition of the 4th of July. I had drawn a different conclusion, and had so informed both the governor and general Smith, in the visits I made to Annapolis and Baltimore, about the 20th of July, immediately after receiving the letter from the secretary of war of the 17th of July above exhibited. In order to supply the deficit in my calculation upon this force, I addressed the letter of the 13th of August to the secretary of war, of which a copy marked 14 A is here presented; proceeded the same or the following day to Washington, by the way of Annapolis, and on the 17th at Washington, the day following my arrival, received the letter from the secretary of war, of which a copy marked 5 B is sent.

I should have stated that two days after my return from Port Tobacco to the city of Washington, about the 6th of August, I received two letters from the secretary of war, the one dated the 15th, the other the 17th of July, which having been addressed to me at Baltimore, had followed me backward and forward from place to place, and unfortunately only reached me at this late period; copies of them are herewith sent marked 6 B and 7 B.

I had in the mean time addressed the letter of the 6th of August to the governor of Pennsylvania, a copy of which is sent marked 1 D, and upon the 8th, on the receiving the letter of the secretary of war of the 15th, I wrote another letter to the governor of Pennsylvania, of which, from haste or much occupation, I did not take a copy, or have mislaid it; it substantially, however, informed him of the number of militia I was authorized to call from him; requesting him to hasten their drafting and organization, and to transmit a list of the officers from brigadiers down who would command. Should this letter be deemed material, a copy can be procured from the governor, and I have written to procure it.

I addressed on the 16th also a similar letter to the governor of Virginia. On the 16th or 17th of August I received from the secretary of state of Pennsylvania, an answer dated the 11th, of which a copy marked 2 D is herewith sent, and from the adjutant general of Virginia, the answer and enclosures herewith sent marked E.

On the morning of Thursday the 18th, intelligence was received from the observatory on Point Look-out, that on the morning of the 17th the enemy's fleet off that place had been reinforced by a formidable squadron of ships and vessels of various sizes.

I immediately made requisitions upon the governors of Maryland and Pennsylvania, and to various militia officers, copies of which are herewith sent marked as follows: to the governor of Pennsylvania 3 D; to the governor of Maryland 2 C; to major general Smith, of Baltimore, 1 F; to brigadier general West, of Prince George's, Maryland, No. 18; to major general Van Ness No. 4; to brigadier general Hungerford, Virginia, No. 14; to brigadier general Douglass and colonel Chilton, of Virginia, and brigadier generals Hinggold, Swearingen, Barrack and Foreman, of Maryland, No. 5.

Besides the letters and correspondence here referred to particularly, a mass of correspondence occurred with various persons relative to my command, and which, as far as I suppose they can have any influence on the investigation, are herewith sent.

That with the governor of Maryland will be found in bundle C, and numbered, in addition to those already mentioned, from 3 C to 11 C, both inclusive. That with general Smith in bundle F, and that with other persons not before referred to, with the numbers before referred to, and exhibited from No. 1 to No. 53, inclusive. Much other correspondence necessary to be carried on, and which occupied much time, took place; which, however, is not sent, as I deemed them not calculated to illustrate the enquiry, and only

calculated uselessly to encumber and embarrass the inquiry. They will be furnished if thought requisite.

I will state as nearly as possible the forces which were in the field under these various demands and requisitions, the time of their assemblage, their condition, and subsequent movements.

The returns first made when I came into command gave me,

For fort M'Henry, under the command of major Armistead, non-commissioned officers, musicians, and privates for duty, .	194
At Annapolis, in forts Severn and Madison, under lieut. Fay,	39
At fort Washington, under lieutenant Edwards,	49
The detachments of the 36th and 38th, and a small detachment of artillery under lieut. col. Scott,	330

612

These corps received no addition, but were gradually diminishing by the ordinary causes which always operate to this effect.

The 2000 Maryland militia, who were ordered to assemble at Baltimore, had been drafted in pursuance of a requisition made by the secretary of war on gen. Smith, of the 20th of April, and as full time had been allowed to make the draft deliberately, they were, as far as practicable, ready to come out without delay....notwithstanding, brig. gen. Stansbury was unable to bring to Bladensburg more than 1,400, including officers, and arrived at Bladensburg on the evening of the 22d of August.

From gen. Stricker's brigade, in the city of Baltimore, which had been called out en masse, I required a regiment of infantry, the battalion of riflemen, and two companies of artillery....not deeming it practicable to reconcile the people of Baltimore to march a greater number, and leave it without any force,

and being strongly persuaded, that the exigency would have drawn in time a greater force from the adjacent country. The detachment from Stricker's brigade, under col. Sterret, arrived at Bladensburg in the night of the 23d of August, and the total amount was 956.

The detachment which had been stationed at Annapolis, under col. Hood, and which had been at the moment transferred by the governor of Maryland to my command, arrived at the bridge at Bladensburg about 15 minutes before the enemy appeared, and I suppose was 6 to 700 strong. I have never had any return of it.

The brigade of gen. Smith, consisting of the militia of the district of Columbia on this side the Potomack, were called out on Thursday the 18th of August; on Friday were assembled, and exertions made to arm and equip them; and on Saturday, the 20th, they crossed the Eastern-branch bridge, and advanced about 5 miles toward the Woodyard. They amounted, I suppose, to about 1200....a return was never had before they separated from my command, as there was not an interval of sufficient rest to have obtained one.

General Young's brigade, from Alexandria, between 5 and 600 strong, crossed the Potomack, Saturday or Sunday the 19th or 20th, and took post near Piscataway.

The call for 3,000 Maryland militia, under the requisition of the 4th July, had produced only 250 men at the moment that the enemy landed at Benedict. In addition to the causes herein-before mentioned the inefficacy of this call is to be attributed to the incredulity of the people on the danger of invasion, the perplexed, broken and harassed state of the militia in St. Mary's, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and a part of Ann Arundel counties, which had rendered it impossible to make the draft in some of them, or to call them from those exposed situations where they

had been on duty for two months, under the local calls of Maryland.

Several other small detachments of Maryland militia, either as volunteers or under the calls on the brigadiers, joined about the day before the action, whose numbers or commanding officers I did not know. They may have amounted to some 4 to 500.

Lt. colonel Tilghman, of the Maryland cavalry, under an order of the governor of Maryland, with about 80 dragoons, arrived at the city of Washington on the 16th of August, on his way to join general Stuart in the lower part of Charles or St. Mary's county.

Under the permission I just then received, to accept all the militia then in the field under the state of Maryland, I informed colonel Tilghman that I had no doubt of the governor's sanction, for which I had applied, and recommended him to halt here. He agreed not only to this, but by the consent of general Stuart, who happened then to be in the city sick, agreed to take my orders.

Lt. col. Laval, of the United States light dragoons, with a small squadron of about 120, who had been mounted at Carlisle the preceding Monday, arrived at Montgomery court-house on the evening of the 19th of August, reported himself to the war office, and received orders to report to me. He moved in the next morning and crossed the Eastern Branch.

Captain Morgan, with a company of about 80 of the 12th United States' infantry, joined at the Long Old-fields on the evening of the 22d.

Colonel Minor, from Virginia, arrived at the city on the evening of the 23d, with about 500 men wholly unarmed and without equipments. Under the direction of colonel Carberry, who had been charged with this subject, they received arms, ammunition, &c. next morning, but not until after the action at Bladensburg.

No part of the 10th had yet arrived.

There had been no adjutant or inspector general attached to my command from its commencement. Major Hite, assistant adjutant general, joined me, on the 16th of August, at Washington, and major Smith, assistant inspector general, on the 19th.

This was the situation, condition and amount of my force and command.

It will be observed that this detail is continued up to the moment of the battle of Bladensburg, but as the time at which the different corps respectively joined is stated, it will be readily seen what troops were concerned in the different movements which will now be detailed.

The innumerably multiplied orders, letters, consultations and demands which crowded upon me at the moment of such an alarm, can more easily be conceived than described, and occupied me nearly day and night from Thursday the 18th of August till Sunday the 21st, and had nearly broken down myself and assistants in preparing, dispensing and attending to them.

On Thursday evening colonel Monroe proposed, if I would detach a troop of cavalry with him, to proceed in the most probable direction to find the enemy and reconnoitre him. Captain Thornton's troop, from Alexandria, were detailed on this service, and on Friday morning the colonel departed with them. At this time it was supposed the enemy intended up the bay as one of his ships was already in view from Annapolis, and his boats were sounding South river. It was colonel Monroe's intention to have proceeded direct to Annapolis; but before he had got without the city he received intelligence that the enemy had proceeded up the Patuxent, and were debarking at Benedict. He therefore bent his course to that place. By his first letter, on Saturday, which reached the president that evening, he was unable to give any precise intelligence, except that the enemy were at Benedict in force.

On Saturday lieutenant colonel Tilghman, with his squadron of dragoons, was despatched by way of the Woodyard to fall down upon the enemy, to annoy, harass and impede their march by every possible means, to remove or destroy forage and provisions from before the enemy, and gain intelligence. Captain Caldwell, with his troop of city cavalry, was despatched with the same views towards Benedict, by Piscataway, it being wholly uncertain what route the enemy would take, if it was his intention to come to Washington.

On Sunday I crossed the Eastern-branch, and joined brigadier general Smith at the Woodyard, where lieutenant colonel Scott with the 36th and 38th, and lieutenant colonel Kramer with the militia from Bladensburg, had arrived by previous orders. On the road to the Woodyard, I received a letter from colonel Monroe, of which a copy is sent marked and at about eight o'clock in the evening, I received another letter from him of which a copy is sent marked and in a very short time after, he arrived himself, and immediately after, colonel Beall, who had seen a body of the enemy, which he estimated at four thousand, (without supposing he had seen the whole) enter Nottingham, on Sunday evening. Col. Monroe, being much exhausted, retired to rest. I gave col. Beall, on account of his experience, orders to proceed and join colonel Hood on his march from Annapolis, and take command of the detachment. I occupied the night in writing letters and orders to various officers and persons, and at day-light ordered a light detachment from general Smith's brigade under major Peter, the regulars under lieutenant col. Scott, and Laval's cavalry, to proceed immediately towards Nottingham, to meet the enemy.

I proceeded immediately in advance myself, accompanied by colonel Monroe and the gentlemen of my staff. I had learned that colonel Tilghman with his cavalry, on the advance of the enemy, had fallen

back upon Marlborough the evening before, and had during the night sent him an order to proceed upon the road from Marlborough to Nottingham, and meet me at the Chappel. Having got considerably in advance of lieutenant colonel Scott's and major Peter's detachments, and also to obtain intelligence, I halted at Mr. Oden's, within a half mile of the junction of the roads from Marlborough and the Woodyard to Nottingham, directing Laval to gain the Marlborough road, post himself at the Chappel, and push forward patrols upon all the roads towards Nottingham. In less than half an hour, and before the detachments of Scott and Peter had come up, intelligence was brought that the enemy was moving on from Nottingham in force, towards the Chappel. I immediately proceeded with the gentlemen who were with me, to gain an observation of the enemy, and came within view of the enemy's advance about two miles below the Chappel. The observation was continued until the enemy reached the Chappel, and Scott and Peter being then near two miles distant from that point, and it being therefore impossible for them to reach the junction of the Marlborough and Woodyard road before the enemy, I sent orders for them to post themselves in the most advantageous position, and wait for me with the body of the cavalry. I turned into the road to the Woodyard, and detached a small party under adjutant general Hite, on the Marlborough road, to watch the enemy's movements on that road, and give information. Upon arriving at Oden's, himself or some other person of the neighborhood whom I knew, and on whom I could rely, informed me that there was a more direct road, but not so much frequented, leading from Nottingham to the Woodyard, and joining that on which I then was two miles nearer the Woodyard. A doubt at that time was not entertained by any body of the intention of the enemy to proceed direct to Washington, and the advantage of dividing their force and proceeding on two roads running so

near each other to the same point so obvious, that I gave orders to Scott and Peter to retire, and occupy the first eligible position between the junction of that road, and the one we were on and the Woodyard; despatched a patrole of cavalry to observe that road, and give the earliest notice of any advance of the enemy upon it. I still continued the observation of the enemy myself, and he turned a part of his column into the road to the Woodyard, and penetrated a skirt of wood, which hid the junction of the Marlborough and Woodyard road from view, and there halted it within a quarter of a mile of Oden's house. I hesitated for some time whether to attribute his delay to a view which he may have had of Scott's and Peter's detachment, or to a design to conceal his movement towards Marlborough, the road to that place being concealed by woods from any point of observation which could be gained.

It appeared afterwards, that his whole force halted here for an hour or upwards, and thus continued in an uncertainty as to his intended route. I had in the mean time rode back and assisted Peter and Scott to post their detachments in a favorable position, from whence I entertained a hope to have given the enemy a serious check without much risk to this detachment. Orders had been previously sent to gen. Smith to post his whole detachment in conjunction with com. Barney, who had by this time joined him from Marlborough with about 400 sailors and marines, and had taken also command of the marines under capt. Miller, who had arrived from the city the night before. I presumed from the appearance of his force it was about 100 or 120. As soon as I had satisfied myself as to the position and disposition of Scott's and Peter's detachments, I advanced again toward the enemy, to ascertain his situation and intentions. It had now become certain that he had taken the road to Marlborough; and col. Men-

roe crossed over to that place, to join lieut. colonel Tilghman, and observe his movements.

I sent an order immediately to Scott and Peter to retire back to gen. Smith, and the latter to take post at the points where the roads from Washington city and the Woodyard to Marlborough, unite. This order was incorrectly delivered or misunderstood; and he took post instead, at the point where the roads from the Woodyard and Marlborough to the city of Washington, unite.—The mistake, however, produced no inconvenience; but, on the contrary, was perhaps better than the position to which I had directed....because it threw my force more between Marlborough and Bladensburg, and also in command of the road by which the enemy did finally advance, which the other position would not have done. Its inconvenience was, that it left open the road to fort Washington, and rendered gen. Young's junction, if it should become proper to advance him, hazardous on that road. It further became necessary to retire still farther back, and the only position where the troops could be tolerably accommodated, or posted to advantage, was at Dunlap's, or, as it is generally called, the Long or Battalion old-fields.

Gen. Smith was therefore ordered to retire to that point with the whole of the troops except the cavalry. Lieut. col. Tilghman and capt. Herbert were charged with hovering upon the enemy on all the roads leading from Bladensburg, from the north, and from Annapolis, to Marlborough. With Lavall's cavalry I advanced to the nearest and most convenient positions between the Woodyard and Marlborough, and found the enemy quietly halted at Marlborough. Tilghman's cavalry picked up one or two prisoners, who had straggled beyond the enemy's pickets; and my examination of them confirmed me, that the enemy did not contemplate leaving Marlborough that day.

After remaining near Marlborough, in observation, till toward the latter part of the afternoon, I returned to gen. Smith, where I arrived toward the close of the day. About dark I learned that the president and heads of departments had arrived at a house about a mile in the rear of the camp. I detached a captain's guard to his quarters; advanced the cavalry of Lavall on the roads towards Marlborough, with orders to patrol as close upon the enemy as possible during the course of the night; and after having waded through the infinite applications, consultations, and calls, necessarily arising from a body of 2500 men, not three days from their homes, without organization, or any practical knowledge of service on the part of their officers, and being obliged to listen to the officious but well intended information and advice of the crowd, who, at such a time, would be full of both, I lay down to snatch a moment of rest.

A causeless alarm from one of the centinels, placed the whole force under arms about 3 o'clock in the morning.

A short time after sun-rise, I rode over to the quarters of the president, to inform him and the secretary of war of the state of things. Upon my return, rumors prevailed that the enemy had taken the road to Queen Anne, which was directly leading to Annapolis. I could not, however, suppose that lieutenant. Tilghman and capt. Herbert would fail to advise me if the fact were so. The rumor, however, gained ground; and just at this time, Mr. Luffborough, of this city, with some 15 or 20 mounted men, offered himself ready to perform any duties on which I could employ them. I immediately despatched him to ascertain the truth of this report by penetrating to that road, and also to obtain whatever information he could relative to the enemy. About 12 o'clock he sent me decisive information that the enemy were not on the Annapolis road.

I received constant intelligence that the enemy still remained in Marlborough; and, therefore, felt no doubt that if he intended to take the road to Annapolis, that any movement upon that road was only an advance party for observation and preparatory to a general movement: and as the morning advanced, and the information brought, still confirmed the impression that the enemy intended no movement from Upper Marlborough, I resolved to endeavour to concentrate the force (which I hoped had now considerably accumulated within my reach) down upon the enemy's lines near Marlborough.

I accordingly ordered a light detachment to be sent forward by general Smith, under major Peter, and having also learned by major Woodyear, of general Stansbury's staff, that he had arrived the evening before at Bladensburg, I sent orders to him to advance toward Marlborough, and to take post at the point where the road from the Old Fields to Queen Ann crosses the road from Bladensburg to Marlborough, which brought him within four miles of the Old Fields, and within from six to eight of the enemy. I was anxiously waiting to hear of Lt. col. Beall's progress with the detachment for Annapolis, and of lieutenant colonel Sterret's, from Baltimore.

The president and heads of department had been upon the field since about eight o'clock. I communicated my views and intentions as above detailed, and informed them that I proposed myself to pass over to the road from Bladensburg to Marlborough, to meet general Stansbury, to make closer observations upon the road direct from the enemy to Bladensburg, and to establish more thoroughly a concert between Stansbury and Smith's command; to be also nearer to Beall to give him also a direction towards the enemy on the road leading into Marlborough from the north, if my intelligence should continue to justify it, and to draw down lieutenant colonel Sterret with his force as soon as I should ascertain where it was. I accord-

ingly, with a troop of Lavall's cavalry, proceeded about 12 o'clock : upon arriving at the Bladensburg road I halted and pushed a patrol of cavalry down toward Marlborough.

In a few minutes after, three of captain Herbert's troop, who were observing down the same road, arrived with two prisoners, who they had just seized in a very bold and dexterous manner. The information of these prisoners confirmed the impression that the enemy did not intend to move from Marlborough that day ; and as it was now one o'clock, I felt little doubt of it. After remaining some time for intelligence from the United States' dragoons, that I had sent down with orders to press down as closely as possible upon the enemy, a slight firing was heard in the direction of the enemy, which I concluded was from the enemy's picket upon this party ; a few moments confirmed this conjecture by the return of a dragoon with this intelligence. A more considerable firing was then, however heard, which I concluded to be a skirmishing by Peter's detachment with the enemy, put upon the alert and advance by the firing at the dragoons.

The firing soon after ceased, and after having sent for the purpose of ascertaining the fact, with directions to follow with intelligence on toward Bladensburg, in which direction I proceeded with the expectation of meeting general Stansbury, and with the intention to halt him until my intelligence should decide my further proceedings.

I had proceeded within four or five miles of Bladensburg, without meeting general Stansbury, when I was overtaken by major M'Kenney, a volunteer aid with general Smith, who informed me that Peters had skirmished with the advancing enemy, who had driven him back on general Smith, and that the enemy had halted within three miles of the Old Fields : that agreeably to my directions upon the probability of an attack, general Smith had sent off the baggage

across the Eastern branch; and that himself and commodore Barney had drawn up the forces ready to receive the enemy, should he advance. On my way toward Bladensburg I had left orders with lieutenant colonel Tilghman's cavalry to continue their observation on the Bladensburg and Marlborough roads, and in case the enemy should move on that road to give general Stansbury immediate notice and fall back on him. In proceeding to the Old Fields I met lieutenant colonel Tilghman himself, and renewed these directions. Captain Herbert was also between general Stansbury and the enemy, with the same instructions.

When major M'Kenney gave me the intelligence of the advance of the enemy, I despatched an aid to gen. Stansbury, with directions to him to fall back, and take the best position in advance of Bladensburg, and unite lieut. col. Sterret with him, should he arrive at Bladensburg, as I expected, that evening; and should he be attacked, to resist as long as possible, and if obliged to retire, to retreat toward the city.

I reached the Old-fields about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and found gen. Smith and com. Barney had judiciously posted their men in expectation of the enemy, and were expecting his approach. The head of the enemy's column was about 3 miles from our position, and 5 miles from Marlborough. He must have reached that point by or before 3 o'clock, and his halt there, at that period of the day, so short a distance from Marlborough, and apparently only drawn out by my parties pressing upon him, and at the point from whence he could take the road to Bladensburg, to the Eastern-branch bridge, or fort Washington, indifferently; or it might be to cover his march upon Annapolis; to which place he had strong temptations to proceed. His force was very imperfectly known; the opinions and representations varying from 4 to 12,000; the better opinion

fixed it at from 5 to 7,000. If he supposed his force insufficient to proceed to Washington, and further reinforcements were expected, which all information concurred to state, the natural conclusion was, that he would seek some place where he could in security refresh his men, and place them in comfortable quarters, near a convenient port for his ships, and whence, upon receiving reinforcements, he would be ready to act against the important points of the country. Having therefore already accomplished one great object of the expedition—the destruction of com. Barney's flotilla—if he was not in a condition to proceed farther into the country, Annapolis offered him a place in all respects such as he would desire. It brought him to a fine port where his ships could lie in safety; it afforded abundant and comfortable quarters for his men, magazines and store-houses for all his stores and munitions of every description; was capable, with very little labor, of being rendered impregnable by land, and he commanded the water; it was the nearest point of debarkation to the city of Washington, without entering a narrow river, liable to great uncertainty in its navigation from adverse winds; and was at hand to Baltimore; equally threatening those two great points, and rendering it absolutely necessary to keep a force doubly sufficient to resist him....one for the protection of Washington, the other for Baltimore. The squadron which was ascending the Potomac, and had now passed the kettle bottoms, the only obstruction in the navigation of the river, might be only a feint, the more effectually to conceal their intentions against Annapolis; or, what was more probable, was intended to unite with the land force, and co-operate in a joint attack on Washington. It was therefore strongly believed, that the land force was destined to proceed and take fort Washington in the rear, where it was wholly defenceless, while it was capable of offering a very formidable resistance to the ascent of ships up the river,

and, imperfect as it was, perhaps capable of repulsing them altogether. And it was, therefore, that I sent to gen. Young, when the force under gen. Smith fell back to the Old-fields, to take a position so as to protect fort Washington, and avoid being taken in the rear by the enemy.

If the object of the enemy was to proceed direct to Washington, the road by Bladensburg offered fewer obstructions than that over the Eastern-branch bridge, although it was six miles farther: and yet, if I had retired toward Bladensburg, I should have been removed so much farther from annoying or impeding the enemy if he proceeded to fort Washington; and I should have left the road to Washington city, by the Eastern-branch bridge, open to him, which, although I had, as I supposed, left a secure arrangement for its destruction, yet the importance of leaving that bridge as long as possible, on account of its great value to us, and the danger that, in the multitude of business which was accumulated on every person during such alarm, confusion, and disorder, arising at such a moment with such raw, undisciplined, inexperienced, and unknown officers and men, rendered it hazardous to trust this direct and important pass unguarded.

It was, under all these circumstances, that, after waiting for the enemy at the Old-fields till sun-down, that I determined to retire over the Eastern-branch bridge, in which com. Barney concurred, and his force with mine proceeded accordingly.

My reason for not remaining at the Old-fields during the night was, that if an attack should be made in the night, our only superiority, which lay in artillery, was lost, and the inexperience of the troops would subject them to certain, infallible and irremediable disorder, and probably total destruction, and thereby occasion the loss of a full half of the force which I could hope to oppose, under more favorable circumstances, to the enemy.

The reasons for retiring by the Eastern-branch bridge, were, the absolute security it gave to that pass, the greater facility of joining gen. Young and aiding in the protection of fort Washington, the greater facility of pursuing the enemy should he recede and proceed to Annapolis, and the certainty that I could draw gen. Stansbury and lieut. col. Sterret to me if the enemy advanced too rapidly for me to advance and unite to support them.

Under the harassing and perplexing embarrassments arising from having a mass of men suddenly assembled without organization, discipline, or officers of any, the least, knowledge of service, except in the case of major Peter, or, if possessing it, unknown to me as such, and the wearied and exhausted state in which incessant application and exertion, for nearly five uninterrupted days and nights, had left me, these views offered themselves to my mind, and determined me to fall back, on Tuesday evening, to the bridge, instead of Bladensburg. Since the event has passed, and if a movement to Bladensburg, had it been made, would not have induced the enemy to pursue another course, it is easy to determine, that a retreat to Bladensburg might have been better....but those who undertake to pass a judgment, should place themselves back to the moment and situation I was in when I formed the resolution, and it will be very difficult to find it an error; or if one, it is of that sort which is supported, when viewed in perspective, by stronger reasons than those which oppose it; and is only found to be an error by experience, which so often confounds all reason and calculation.

Upon arriving at the bridge about 8 o'clock, I directed general Smith to halt his men in the most convenient position near the bridge on this side; and I passed over and rode directly to the president's, and informed him of the then state of things. I had expected I should probably have found the secretary of

war and other heads of departments there, but they had respectively retired to their homes. I returned towards the bridge, leaving at M'Keowin's hotel the borrowed horse on which I rode. Both those I had with me being exhausted and worn down, and as I knew no one who had a horse in a different situation, I proceeded on foot to the camp. General Smith was not at the moment there. I proceeded on to the bridge where I found about thirty men with axes for the purpose of cutting the bridge down, and no other preparation for destroying it made. I proceeded again to the camp; detached a party of volunteers to burn the upper bridge at once; detached a party of regular infantry across the bridge, in advance toward the enemy about half a mile, to prevent him from seizing it by surprise, and posted Burch's artillery to command the pass of the bridge on this side. I learned at the bridge that some persons from the navy yard had been to the bridge to take some steps for destroying it, and knowing that this was the nearest and the only place indeed from whence I could draw the powder, boats and combustibles for the purpose of rendering its destruction sure at any moment, I proceeded, accompanied by major Cox, of Georgetown, to ascertain what preparations had been made. I arrived there about 12 or 1 o'clock, saw colonel Wharton, who referred me to commodore Tingey, to whom I then proceeded, and roused him from bed. He informed me that several casks of powder were ready in boats to be sent from the navy yard to blow up the bridge when necessary. I begged him to increase the quantity of powder, to furnish a quantity of combustibles, also to be laid upon the bridge that its destruction, when necessary, in one way or other might be put beyond doubt. Commodore Tingey undertook to have what I requested provided, sent without delay to the bridge. I returned to the bridge to see that the different detachments which I had stationed there were upon the alert, and understood the objects

for which they were detached. And I thence returned to the camp, between 3 and 4 o'clock, much exhausted, and considerably hurt in the right arm and ankle from a severe fall which I had into a gully or ditch on my way to the navy yard. I snatched about an hour or two of sleep, rose and proceeded to gather my attendants and horses, much exhausted and worn down by the incessant action of the three preceding days, and proceeded to establish my head quarters at a house near the bridge.

My patroles and videttes not having yet brought me any intelligence of a movement of the enemy, and being still doubtful whether he might not move upon Annapolis, fort Warburton or toward the bridge, rather than Bladensburg, I held the position near the bridge, as that which, under all circumstances, would enable me best to act against the enemy in any alternative. I learned about this time, with considerable mortification, that general Stansbury, from misunderstanding or some other cause, instead of holding a position during the night in advance of Bladensburg, had taken one about a mile in its rear, and that his men, from a causeless alarm, had been under arms the greater part of the night and moved once or twice, and that he was at that moment on his march into the city. I instantly sent him an order to resume his position at Bladensburg, to post himself to the best advantage, make the utmost resistance, and to rely upon my supporting him if the enemy should move upon that road. I had at a very early hour in the morning detached captain Graham, with his troop of Virginia cavalry, to proceed by Bladensburg down upon the road toward the enemy, and ensure by that means timely notice to general Stansbury and myself, should the enemy turn that way. With this addition to the cavalry already on those roads, it became impossible for the enemy to take any steps unobserved. Additional cavalry patroles and videttes were also detached upon all the roads across the bridge to insure the

certainty of intelligence, let the enemy move as he might.

Colonel Minor had also arrived in the city the evening before, with 500 or 600 militia from Virginia, but they were without arms, accoutrements or ammunition. I urged him to hasten his equipment, which I learn was delayed by some difficulty in finding colonel Carberry, charged with that business; and he had not received his arms, &c. when about ten o'clock I received intelligence that the enemy had turned the head of his column towards Bladensburg. Commodore Barney had, upon my suggestion, posted his artillery to command the bridge early in the morning.

As soon as I learned the enemy were moving toward Bladensburg, I ordered general Smith with the whole of the troops to move immediately to that point.

The necessary detention arising from orders to issue, interrogations and applications to be answered from all points being past, I proceeded on to Bladensburg, leaving the president and some of the heads of departments at my quarters, where they had been for an hour or more. I arrived at the bridge at Bladensburg about 12 o'clock, where I found lieutenant colonel Beall had that moment passed with his command, having just arrived from Annapolis. I had passed the line of Stansbury's brigade formed in the field upon the left of the road, at about a quarter of a mile in rear of the bridge; and on the road, a short distance in rear of Stansbury's line, I met several gentlemen, and among the others, I think, Mr. Francis Key, of Georgetown, who informed me that he had thought that the troops coming from the city could be most advantageously posted on the right and left of the road near that point. General Smith being present, Mr. Key undertook, I believe, being sent for that purpose, to shew the positions proposed. I left general Smith to make a disposition of these troops

and proceeded to the bridge, where I found lieutenant colonel Beall as before stated.* I inquired whether he had any directions as to his position; he replied, he had been shewn a high hill upon the right of the road ranging with the proposed second line. It being a commanding position and necessary to be occupied by some corps, I directed him to proceed agreeably to the instructions he had received. I then rode up to a battery which had been thrown up to command the street which entered Bladensburg from the side of the enemy and the bridge, where I found the Baltimore artillery posted with the Baltimore riflemen to support them. Upon enquiry I learned that general Stansbury was on a rising ground upon the left of his line. I rode immediately thither and found him and colonel Monroe together. The latter gentleman informed me, that he had been aiding general Stansbury to post his command, and wished me to proceed to examine it with them to see how far I approved of it. We were just proceeding with this view, when some person rode up and stated, that news had just been received of a signal victory obtained by general Izard over the enemy, in which 1000 of the enemy were slain and many prisoners taken. I ordered the news to be immediately communicated to the troops, for the purpose of giving additional impulse to their spirits and courage. The column of the enemy at this moment appeared in view about a mile distant, moving up the Eastern-branch parallel to our position. From the left where I was, I perceived that if the position of the advanced artillery were forced, that two or three pieces upon the left of Stansbury would be necessary to scour an orchard,

* Since writing the above I have seen general Smith, who informs me that Mr. Key had been examining the grounds with him, and that it was his views that Mr. Key had been stating. He came up at the moment Mr. Key had given me the information. I have been under the impression, till thus corrected, that it was the suggestion of colonel Monroe and general Stansbury, that had suggested that position. The circumstance is immaterial, except for the purpose of literal accuracy when necessary.

which lay between his line and his artillery, and for another rifle company to increase the support of this artillery. These were promptly sent forward by gen. Smith, and posted as hastily as possible, and it was barely accomplished before I was obliged to give orders to the advanced artillery to open upon the enemy, who was descending the street toward the bridge. All further examination or movement was now impossible, and the position where I then was, immediately in rear of the left of Stansbury's line, being the most advanced position from which I could have any commanding view, I remained there. The fire of our advanced artillery occasioned the enemy who were advancing, and who were light troops, to leave the street, and they crept down under the cover of houses and trees in loose order, so as not to expose them to risk from the shot: it was therefore only occasionally that an object presented at which the artillery could fire.

In this sort of suspension, the enemy began to throw his rockets, and his light troops began to accumulate down in the lower parts of the town and near the bridge, but principally covered from view by the houses. Their light troops, however, soon began to issue out and press across the creek, which was every where fordable, and in most places lined with bushes or trees, which were sufficient, however, to conceal the movements of light troops who act in the manner of theirs singly. The advanced riflemen now began to fire and continued it for a half a dozen rounds, when I observed them to run back to the skirts of the orchard on the left, where they became visible, the boughs of the orchard trees concealing their original position, as also that of the artillery from view. A retreat of twenty or thirty yards from their original position toward the left, brought them in view on the edge of the orchard: they halted there and seemed for a moment returning to their position, but in a few minutes entirely broke and retired to the left of

Stansbury's line. I immediately ordered the fifth Baltimore regiment, lieutenant col. Sterrett being the left of Stansbury's line, to advance and sustain the artillery. They promptly commenced this movement; but the rockets, which had for the first three or four passed very high above the heads of the line, now received a more horizontal direction, and passed very close above the heads of Schutz's and Ragan's regiments, composing the centre and left of Stansbury's line: a universal flight of these two regiments was the consequence. This leaving the right of the 5th wholly unsupported, I ordered it to halt, rode swiftly across the field toward those who had so shamefully fled, and exerted my voice to the utmost to arrest them. They halted, began to collect, and seemed to be returning to their places. An ill-founded reliance that their officers would succeed in rallying them, when I had thus succeeded in stopping the greatest part of them, induced me immediately to return to the 5th, the situation of which was likely to become very critical, and that position gave me the best command of view. To my astonishment and mortification, however, when I had regained my position, I found the whole of these regiments (except a few of Ragan's, not more than forty, rallied by himself, and as many perhaps of Schutz's rallied, I learn by captain Showers and a captain —, whose name I do not recollect) were flying in the utmost precipitation and disorder.

The advanced artillery had immediately followed the riflemen and retired by the left of the 5th. I directed them to take post on a rising ground which I pointed out in the rear. The 5th and the artillery on its left still remained, and I hoped that their fire, notwithstanding the obstruction of the boughs of the orchard, which being below covered the enemy, would have been enabled to scour this approach and prevent his advance. The enemy's light troops, by single men, shewed themselves on the lower edge of

the left of the orchard, and received the fire of this artillery and the 5th, which made them draw back. The cover to them was, however, so complete, that they were enabled to advance singly, and take positions from which their fire annoyed the 5th considerably, without either that regiment or the artillery being able to return the fire with any probability of effect. In this situation I had actually given an order to the 5th and artillery to retire up to the hill toward a wood more to the left and a little in the rear, for the purpose of drawing them further from the orchard and out of reach of the enemy's fire, while he was sheltered by the orchard. An aversion, however, to retire before the necessity became stronger, and the hope that the enemy would issue in a body from the left of the orchard and enable us to act upon him on terms of equality, and the fear that a movement of retreat might, in raw troops, produce some confusion, and lose us this chance, induced me instantly to countermand the order, and direct the artillery to fire into a wooden barn on the lower end of the orchard, behind which I supposed the enemy might be sheltered in considerable numbers. The fire of the enemy now began, however, to annoy the 5th still more in wounding several of them, and a strong column of the enemy having passed up the road as high as the right of the 5th, and beginning to deploy into the field to take them in flank, I directed the artillery to retire to the hill, to which I had directed the Baltimore artillery to proceed and halt, and ordered the 5th regiment also to retire. This corps, which had heretofore acted so firmly, evinced the usual incapacity of raw troops to make orderly movements in the face of the enemy, and their retreat in a very few moments became a flight of absolute and total disorder.

The direct line of retreat to the whole of this first line being to the hill on which I had directed the artillery to halt, and immediately in connexion with

the positions of general Smith's corps, which were not arrayed in line, but posted on advantageous positions in connexion with and supporting each other, according as the nature of the ground admitted and required; I had not for a moment, dispersed and disordered as was the whole of Stansbury's command, supposed that their retreat would have taken a different direction. But it soon became apparent that the whole mass were throwing themselves off to the right on the retreat toward Montgomery court-house, and flying wide of this point; the whole of the cavalry, probably, from the pressure of the infantry that way, were also thrown wide of the line of retreat toward the right. After making every effort to turn the current more toward general Smith's command and the city in vain, and finding that it was impossible to collect any force to support the artillery, which I had directed to halt, and finding also that the enemy's light troops were extending themselves in that direction, and pressing the pursuit, I directed the artillery to continue their retreat on the road they then were, toward the capitol, it being impossible for them to get across to the turn-pike road or unite with gen. Smith's brigade.

The hope of again forming the first line at this point, and their renewing the retreat, or at all events of being able to rally them between the capitol and that point, and renewing the contest, induced me, at the moment I directed the 5th regiment to retreat, to request Mr. Riggs, of Georgetown, to proceed to the president and inform him that we had been driven back, but that it was my hope and intention to form and renew the contest between that place and the capitol.

As soon as I found it vain longer to endeavor to turn the tide of retreat toward the left, I turned toward the positions occupied by lieutenant colonel Beall, commodore Barney and general Smith. By this time the enemy had advanced up the road,

had driven back lieutenant colonel Kramer's command posted on the right of the road and in advance of commodore Barney, after having well maintained his position and much hurt the enemy, and also continued to fire during his retreat. He had come under the destructive fire of commodore Barney, which had turned him up the hill towards lieutenant colonel Beall, whose detachment gave one or two ineffective fires and fled. Their position was known to me, was very conspicuous, and the extreme right. The enemy, therefore, had gained this commanding position, and was passing our right flank; his force pursuing on the left, had also advanced to a line with our left, and there was nothing there to oppose him. To preserve Smith's command from being pressed in front by fresh troops of the enemy, who were coming on at the same time, while they were under the certainty of being assailed on both flanks and the rear by the enemy, who respectively gained them; in which circumstances their destruction or surrender would have been inevitable; I sent (my horse being unable to move with the rapidity I wished) to gen. Smith, to retreat. I am not acquainted with the relative position of the different corps composing his command, and cannot therefore determine who of them engaged the enemy, nor could I see how they acted; but when I arrived in succession at his different corps, which I did as soon as practicable, I do not recollect to have found any of them that were not in order, and retreating with as little confusion as could have been expected. When I reached the road I found commodore Barney's men also retiring on the road, he having been overpowered by those who drove off Beall's regiment about the time I sent the order to retreat.

I still had no doubt but that Stansbury's command and the cavalry would have fallen down upon the capitol, by the roads which enter that part of the city from the north, and still solaced myself with the persuasion that I should be able there to rally them, up-

on the city and Georgetown troops who were retiring in order; and make another effort in advance of the capitol to repulse the enemy.

After accompanying the retreating army within two miles of the capitol, I rode forward for the purpose of selecting a position, and endeavouring to collect those whom I supposed, from the rapidity of their flight, might have reached that point. A half a mile in advance of the capitol I met colonel Minor with his detachment, and directed him to form his men, wait until the retreating army passed, and protect them if necessary.

When I arrived at the capitol I found not a man had passed that way, and notwithstanding the commanding view which is there afforded to the north, I could see no appearance of the troops. I despatched an order to call in the cavalry to me there.

In a few moments the secretary of state and the secretary of war joined me, besides that they had been witnesses to the dispersion of the troops and the exhaustion of those just halted by me. I stated the diminution of my force, and the extent of the positions which rendered it impossible to place the force I then had in such a position as to prevent the enemy from taking me on the flank as well as front, and that no reasonable hope could be entertained, that we had any troops who could be relied on to make a resistance as desperate as necessary, in an isolated building which could not be supported by a sufficiency of troops without; indeed it would have taken nearly the whole of the troops to have sufficiently filled the two wings, which would have left the enemy masters of every other part of the city, and given him the opportunity, without risk, in twenty-four hours to have starved them into a surrender. The same objection equally applied to the occupation of any particular part of the city.

Both these gentlemen concurred that it would subject the whole of my force to certain capture or des-

truction; and in its reduced and exhausted condition it was wise and proper to retire through Georgetown, and take post in the rear of it, on the heights, to collect my force. I accordingly pursued this course, and halted at Tenley town, two miles north of Georgetown, on the Frederick road. Here was evinced one of the great defects of all undisciplined and unorganized troops; no effort could rouse officers and men to the exertion necessary to place themselves in such a state of comfort and security as is attainable, even under very disadvantageous circumstances. Such of them as could be halted, instead of making those efforts, gave themselves up to the uncontrolled feelings which fatigue, exhaustion and privation produced, and many hundreds, in spite of all precautions and efforts, passed on and pursued their way, either towards home or in search of refreshments and quarters. After waiting in this position until I supposed I collected all the force that could be gathered, I proceeded about 5 miles further on the river road, which leads a little wide to the left of Montgomery court house, and in the morning gave orders for the whole to assemble at Montgomery court house.

This position promised us shelter from the rain that began to fall an hour before day; was the most probable place for the supply of provisions which the troops very much needed; and was a position from which we could best interpose between the enemy and Baltimore, and to which place at that time nobody doubted he intended to go by land from Washington.

In pursuance of this view, among the first acts after my arrival at Montgomery court-house, was to direct a letter to general Stricker, who commanded at Baltimore, informing him that it was my intention to gather my force together there, receive what reinforcements I could, shew myself to the enemy as strong as possible, hang on his flank should he move to Baltimore, intimidate and harass him as much as

possible in his movements, and endeavor always to preserve the power of interposing between him and Baltimore ; directing him to re-establish the dispersed command of lieutenant colonel Sterrett, multiply his means as much as possible, stop all re-inforcements of militia from Maryland, Pennsylvania or elsewhere, and present himself to the enemy at the crossing of the Patapsco, in as imposing a form as possible.

This letter I sent by captain Aisquith, whom I found at Montgomery with 15 or 20 others, the only part of the Baltimore detachment which had not returned home.

The first object was, in the absence of quarter-master and contractor, to make efforts to provide quarters and refreshments for my men ; a few provisions were found there belonging to the contractor, and a person temporarily appointed to issue, and the most active men of the place called upon and authorized to get in provisions.

The next object was to obtain a return of the different corps, which, from causes that can easily be understood among undisciplined men, and unskilful officers, proved abortive before we moved next day. The arrival of several detachments of re-inforcements, the reports of officers bringing on detachments who wanted orders and instructions, and the multiplied complaints and wants of men and officers crowded together in small quarters, or entirely out of doors in a rainy, tempestuous day ; the calculations and arrangements necessary for ulterior operations, and to meet the demands and wants of the great force which my calls were likely to produce, may be supposed to have been as much as could be borne by the attention and efforts of one man, which he was obliged to encounter for the want of a skilful or even organized staff of any kind.

No regular details for service of any kind could be performed, and all the duties of this description were

necessarily performed by the voluntary zeal of those corps who could not be borne down or discouraged by difficulties. My efforts were devoted to endeavor to prepare the detachment to move down toward the city, and hang upon and strike at the enemy whenever an opportunity occurred. The next morning, however, before a return of the corps could be had and their situation known, I received intelligence that the enemy had moved from Washington the preceding night, and was in full march for Baltimore. I instantly put my command under arms, multiplied and strengthened my patrols to gain intelligence, and advanced as rapidly as was practicable to Baltimore. When the forces arrived at Snell's bridge on the upper branch of the Patuxent, I had concluded that if the enemy was, as we had still reason to believe, proceeding to Baltimore, that it would be most advisable for me to proceed directly thither, to lend the whole force of my power as commander of the district, to call out and bring into activity the resources of the place, and also because it was likely to become the most important station of the command. I accordingly left the command with general Stansbury, senior brigadier, and proceeded that night to Baltimore. On the road I met an express from major general S. Smith, who delivered me a letter, in which he informed me he had been called out into service, and had assumed the command according to his rank; and by the time I reached Baltimore, I also learned that the enemy was proceeding to Marlborough, and not toward Baltimore.

If I had had longer time, or to repeat the action of Bladensburg, I could correct several errors which might materially have affected the issue of that battle. The advanced force ought to have been nearer to the creek along the edge of the low ground, where they would have been skirted with bushes, and have avoided the inconvenience of the cover which the orchard afforded the enemy. The edge of the low

grounds on the right of the road ought to have been lined with musketry, and a battery of cannon also planted in the field on the right of the road directly fronting the bridge; and if commodore Barney's heavy artillery, with his more expert artillerists, had occupied the position which the advanced artillerists did, and these posts been obstinately defended, the enemy would not have crossed the river at that point, but would have been obliged to make a circuit round to his right, and have crossed above and at the upper end of the town; or if the whole force had been posted at the position of the second line with all the advantage which it afforded, and have acted with tolerable firmness and courage, the event might have been different; but no advantage of position is proof against groundless panic and a total want of discipline, skill and experience.

On the night of my retreat to the city, I sent assistant adjutant general Hite down to general Young, to inform him of the movement, and to direct him to take the best position to secure fort Washington, and his junction with me; or in case the enemy should interpose between him and me, to have his boats ready to transport his men across the river; or if he could not do that, to fall down the river and unite with gen. Stuart, and harass the enemy in the rear; and above all to be alert and keep a vigilant guard upon every avenue of approach to prevent a surprise. I also sent, by major Hite, directions to the commanding officer of fort Washington, to advance a guard up to the main road upon all the roads leading to the fort, and in the event of his being taken in the rear of the fort by the enemy, to blow up the fort, and retire across the river.

The distance of general Young, and the necessity of retaining a position near the fort as long as the designs of the enemy remained uncertain, rendered it impossible to have the assistance of his force at Bladensburg.

There was not a bridge on the road which the enemy pursued from his debarkation to Washington, the destruction of which would have retarded his advance ten minutes. I believe in fact that the bridge at Bladensburg is the only one, and the facility with which that stream is every where fordable above the bridge, rendered useless the destroying it. Indeed I believe that had artillery been posted as advantageously as it might have been, and well served, the bridge would have acted as a decoy to the enemy to lead him into danger, and have been useful to us.

Those who have that happy intrepidity of assurance in their own capacity to see with certainty, in all cases, the means by which they could have avoided the errors of others, and by which past calamities might always have been averted, will find my condemnation easy. Those who are disposed to measure difficulties by the limits of human capacity, and who will impartially place themselves in my situation, will find it difficult to decide that any errors have been committed which might not have been equalled or surpassed by any other commander, or that the calamities which have followed, could have been averted or mitigated.

This narrative is accompanied by a map with explanations, which will facilitate the understanding of it.

No. 8.

Reports of generals Stansbury, Smith, Young, Douglass and Hungerford; colonels Sterrett, Minor, Tayloe, Lall and Beall; major Pinkney, and captains Burch and Caldwell.

General Stansbury's report.

BALTIMORE, November 15, 1814.

By general orders from the war department of the 20th of April, 1814, major general S. Smith was directed to draft from his division, and hold in readiness to march at a moment's warning, two thousand men, officers included.

By major general Smith's division orders of the 29th of April, I was directed to furnish, by draft from my brigade, as its quota, one thousand of this requisition, and hold them in readiness to march, at a moment's warning, to Baltimore for its defence. The first of May those orders were complied with, agreeably to a detail accompanying said orders.

On the 18th of July, major general Smith issued division orders, requiring the quota from my brigade, the 11th, and that from the 2d and 9th, to march, and rendezvous at Baltimore. My orders were issued on the 19th; the troops began to assemble on the 24th, and were encamped about one and a half miles northward of the city, at a place called camp Fairfield.

On the 21st of July, by major general Smith, I was directed to take charge of this brigade, and commenced preparing for their reception. Early in August, general Winder being vested with the command of the tenth military district, superseded general Smith in the command.

On Saturday, August the 20th, about 4 o'clock, P. M. I received, by express, letter No. 1, directing me to move down with my whole force for Washington.

By this morning's regimental reports, the force of my brigade then in camp, appeared as follows :

The 1st regiment, under lieutenant colonel Ragan, officers included, 550 ; 2d regiment, under lieutenant colonel Schutz, officers also included, fit for duty, 803.

I immediately issued orders for waggons to be procured, provisions served out, tents struck, and every thing prepared to march that evening. But the difficulty of obtaining waggons to transport tents and camp equipage, prevented my moving more than part of the brigade this evening. The residue followed on the morning of the 21st. The advance party encamped at the Stag tavern ; the rear three miles short of it, on the evening of the 21st.

About 10 o'clock P. M. I received from general Winder, by express, letter No. 2, dated the 21st, directing me to halt until further orders.

August 22d, at 10 A. M. received from general Winder, letter No. 3, dated at the Woodyard the 21st, 10 o'clock P. M. directing me to advance with all speed to Bladensburg. In consequence thereof, the line of march was taken up immediately, and at 7 o'clock P. M. we arrived at Bladensburg. The 1st regiment encamped on the hill south east ; the 2d on the north west of the town ; and on Tuesday morning the 23d, joined the 1st regiment on Lownd's hill, near Bladensburgh. About 10 o'clock A. M. received from general Winder, letter No. 4, dated at head quarters, Battalion Old fields, August 22d, containing orders to march my brigade (with the troops under colonel Sterrett if they had joined me,) slowly towards Marlborough, and take a position on the road not far from that place, and that he would join me some time that day.

The troops under the command of lieutenant colonel Sterret, had not joined me, nor was I certain at what time they would arrive. The brigade was instantly put in motion, and the march commenced towards

Marlborough with a view of complying with general Winder's orders. I immediately despatched my aid de camp, major Woodyear, to general Winder, to communicate all the information which he might require, as to my force ; to receive particular orders as to the position I should take in the vicinity of Marlborough, and to obtain a knowledge of the country, and of the situation of the enemy. After proceeding about one mile on the road to Marlborough, I met captain Moses Tabs riding express, to inform me, that the enemy, with their whole force, had left Marlborough, and were on their march toward me, distant about six miles. This information made me determine to avail myself of the high grounds I occupied in the morning, to which I immediately returned, and made the necessary preparations to receive the enemy. I directed captain Tabs to return and reconnoitre the enemy, and give me every information. About four o'clock P. M. he returned, and informed me that the enemy, on leaving Marlborough, had taken a different route. Soon after, my aid de camp, major Woodyear, returned from general Winder, and informed me that the intelligence I had received of the movements of the enemy were, in part, incorrect, and that general Winder wished me to encamp on the direct road from Bladensburg to Marlborough, at about seven miles distant from the latter place. The assistant adjutant general, major Hite, accompanied major Woodyear. By letter No. 4, I was first informed that lieutenant colonel Sterret's detachment, consisting of the 5th regiment, about five hundred strong; major Pinkney's rifle battalion, about one hundred and fifty, and captains Myer's and Magraders's companies of artillery, about one hundred and fifty, were attached to my command. These troops had not joined me, but were on their march. I despatched an express with this letter to lieutenant colonel Sterret, as soon as received, requesting him to move on with all possible expedition.

About sun set, on the 23d, he arrived with his command, and encamped near my brigade. The fatigued situation of his troops induced me to halt for the night, on the hill near Bladensburg, with the intention of moving towards Marlborough at reveille on the 24th. At about 8 o'clock P. M. a militia captain, who resided near Bladensburg, came into camp, attended by one of my centinels, and informed me he was from general Winder's camp, at the Battalion Old Fields; that gen. Winder was not in camp when he left it, and that it was apprehended he had been taken prisoner, as he had gone out to reconnoitre the enemy, and had not returned; that a detachment from the army had skirmished that day with the British, and that brigadier general Smith, of the district of Columbia, had taken the command of the army, and would certainly join me in the course of the night. About 11 o'clock P. M. the secretary of state, colonel Monroe, with several gentlemen, came to my tent, and, as well as I recollect, colonel Monroe observed that he was from Washington; that he had been at, or heard from the camp of general Winder; that there was an alarming silence with respect to general Winder, who had gone out to reconnoitre the enemy, and had not been heard of, and it was feared he was taken; that gen. Smith had by persuation taken the command, and that they would move towards and join me before morning, he expected, from the Battalion Old Fields, and advised vigilance to prevent surprise. Soon after the departure of colonel Monroe, the advanced pickets on the road by which we expected the enemy, and was the direct one from Marlborough, fired, and in a few moments my whole command were under arms, and prepared for action. The cavalry under col. Tilghman, who had come into town a little after dark for refreshments, were ordered down the Marlborough road, except captain Herbert, with his troop, who was directed to push down the road toward the Battalion Old Fields, until he should fall in with general

Winder's army, which I was confident would join me that night.

The troops were under arms until after two o'clock A. M. of the 24th, when being advised by the cavalry that the enemy were not near, I ordered them to retire to their tents, but to be ready to turn out at a moment's warning; and strong picket guards were placed on the roads in every direction. Supposing my right and rear covered by general Winder's force, I felt no apprehensions of surprise there, and no expectation that the enemy, without first beating general Winder, could approach me, either by the battalion or river road. But about half after two o'clock A. M. major Bates, assistant adjutant general of militia, came to me from Washington, with a message from general Winder, informing me, that general Winder had retreated from the Battalion Old-fields into the city of Washington across the bridge, which he had ordered to be burnt, and that the general expected I would resist the enemy as long as possible, should he move against me in that direction. Thus was my expectations of security from the battalion and river roads cut off, my right flank and rear uncovered, and liable to be attacked and turned, without the possibility of securing it, in the position I then lay.

I instantly sent for lieutenant colonel Sterrett, of the 5th, major Pinkney of the rifle corps, and lieutenant colonel Ragan, lieutenant colonel Schutz being present, officers in whom I placed the highest confidence, and stated to them the information and orders I had just received from general Winder, and our situation with respect to the enemy; they were unanimous in opinion, that our situation on that hill could not be defended with the force then under my command, worn down with hunger and fatigue as they were, and that it was indispensably necessary, for the security of the army, that we should immediately retire across the bridge of Bladensburg, and take a position on the road between Bladensburg and the city, which we

could defend. Colonel Tilghman of the cavalry, observed, he thought we had no time to lose. In this opinion I perfectly coincided. Orders were instantly given to strike tents, and prepare to march, and in about thirty minutes, without noise or confusion, the whole were in motion, and about half past 3 o'clock in the morning, passed the bridge at Bladensburg leading to the city of Washington. Securing our rear from surprise, we halted in the road until the approach of day, with a view of finding some place where water could be had, in order that the men might cook their provisions, and refresh themselves for a few moments. The provisions consisted of salt beef of an inferior quality, the flour old and musty. At day-light, I moved on to the foot of a hill near a brick-yard, and there ordered the troops to refresh themselves. This was about one and a half miles from Bladensburg.

Early in the morning, I had despatched major Woodyear to Washington, to inform general Winder of my movement and situation; of the exhausted state of the troops, and the impracticability of their meeting the enemy, in their present fatigued state, with any prospect of success, unless reinforced. I rode to the top of the hill to examine the country. On my descending it again, a note was presented to me by an express from general Winder, dated at Washington (written I presumed without a knowledge of my movements) directing me to oppose the enemy as long as I could, should he attempt a passage by the way of Bladensburg. This note I have mislaid.

I called a council of war, consisting of lieutenant colonel Sterrett, lieutenant colonel Ragan and major Pinkney. I laid the letter before them. Colonel Sterrett observed, that he marched from Baltimore with a determination to defend the city; that his men the day before, by a forced march from the Buck tavern, or Snowden's, reached Bladensburg without halting to cook; that they had been under arms near-

ly the whole of the night without any sleep or food ; that major Pinkney's riflemen, and the two companies of artillery, were in the same situation, and that they were so completely worn down and exhausted, that he should consider it a sacrifice of both officers and men, to seek the enemy at any considerable distance from general Winder's force, as no good could result therefrom. Major Pinkney and colonel Ragan expressed themselves to the same effect, and, with colonel Sterrett, urged the propriety of moving further on the road toward the city, with a view of taking a stand on some more favorable ground for defence, with a better prospect of being joined by the forces under general Winder ; and expressed their willingness to give their opinions in writing. I could not but admit the correctness of their views, and ordered the waggons to move on slowly towards the city, intending to follow on with the troops.

At this moment, major Woodyear returned from Washington with positive orders from gen. Winder, to give the enemy battle at Bladensburg, should he move that way, and that he would join me if necessary.

I immediately ordered the troops to retrace their steps to Bladensburg, determined to maintain, if possible, the ground at all hazards.

On arriving in the orchard near the mill, I directed the artillery to post themselves behind a small breast-work of dirt, that lately had been thrown up by col. Wadsworth. This battery commanded the pass into Bladensburg, and the bridge south-westerly of the town. Our artillery consisted of six 6 pounders ; major Pinkney's battalion of riflemen on their right, under cover of the town and bushes, also commanding the pass by the bridge : two companies from lieutenant colonel Schutz's regiment, under the command of captains Ducker and Gorsuch, acting as riflemen, although principally armed with muskets, on the left of the artillery, near, and protected by the barn, intended to defend the road leading by the mill

on the left of the battery into the field; colonel Sterrett's regiment was halted in the orchard, on the right and in the rear; and the regiments of colonels Ragan and Schutz were also halted in the orchard in the rear, and on the left flank near the creek. My intentions were, that they should remain here to refresh themselves as long as possible, and as soon as the enemy appeared, to form colonel Sterrett's regiment, (in whom I placed great confidence) on the right, their left resting on and supporting the right of major Pinkuey's riflemen, in view of the bridge, and fronting the road along which ran a fence, and act as occasion should require. Colonels Ragan's and Schultz's regiments, were to be drawn up in eschellon, their right resting on the left of captains Ducker's and Gorsuch's rifle companies, in order to prevent the enemy from pressing, and turning our left, hoping that general Winder would join me before the battle would commence, and occupy the ground in my rear as a second line.

About 11 o'clock A. M. I was informed by a dragoon from lieutenant colonel Beall, that he was on the road from Annapolis to Bladensburg, with about eight hundred men, distant from me about five miles, and wished to know the distance and situation of the enemy. I directed the dragoon to return and inform him, that I had that moment received information, that the British with their whole force, were approaching Bladensburg by the river road, and that they were only three and a half miles distant, and advised the colonel to file off to his right and cross above Bladensburg, to fall into an old road, which I understood led to our left toward Washington, and take a position on the high grounds, N. and N. W. of Bladensburg, which would completely protect my left, by preventing the enemy from out-flanking us that way, and force their main body across the bridge in the face of my artillery and riflemen on the main road, and expose them to the fire of the 5th regiment

under colonel Sterrett, who would be protected by the fence.

This advice it appeared colonel Beall only took in part, I presumed, from an anxious wish to place himself between the enemy and the city. He sent his baggage off to the right, and with his troops passed the bridge at Bladensburg about thirty minutes before the enemy appeared on Mr. Lowndes's hill, and took his station on the hill, as I was informed, near the brick kiln where we halted in the morning, about one and a half miles in my rear, and on the left of the road leading to the city. About meridian, the enemy could clearly be seen making towards us by the river road.

While I was giving some directions to the artillery, I found lieutenant cols. Ragan's and Schutz's regiments had been moved from the place where I had stationed them, and marched out of the orchard up the hill, and formed in order of battle about 250 yards above the orchard, and upwards of 500 yards in the rear of the artillery and riflemen. Thus uncovered by the trees of the orchard, their situation and numbers were clearly seen by the enemy from Lowndes's hill, and the flanks of the artillery and riflemen unprotected, and laid liable to be turned, our main body being placed too far off to render them any aid. On riding up the hill to know who had ordered this movement, I was informed that gen. Winder was on the ground. At this time I met with brigadier gen. Smith, of the district of Columbia, and some conversation took place between us respecting the order of battle, and seniority; the particulars I do not recollect. I immediately rode to the mill, where I understood general Winder was, and found him reconnoitring the position of the enemy. While in conversation with him, the 5th regiment was taken out of the orchard, marched up the hill, and stationed on the left of colonel Schutz's regiment, that of col.

Ragan's being on the right, its right resting on the main road; but, as I before observed, the whole at so great a distance from the artillery and riflemen, that they had to contend with the whole British force, and so much exposed, that it has been a cause of astonishment they preserved their ground so long, and ultimately succeeded in retreating. Whose plan this was, I know not: it was not mine; nor did it meet with my approbation; but finding a superior officer on the ground, I concluded he had ordered it, consequently did not interfere. General Winder asked me where I meant to take my station? I answered, about the centre of my brigade. He said he would take his on the left of the fifth regiment. General Winder was extremely active in giving directions and in encouraging the men. I took my station in the centre of colonels Ragan's and Schutz's regiments, but occasionally rode along the line, encouraging the men, and giving orders to the officers. Major Woodyear I directed to keep with the left of colonel Schutz's regiment, to cheer up the men, and assist the officers. Major Randall rode with me. Soon after, the action commenced by the artillery and riflemen at the battery. The fire of the artillery had great effect, and evidently produced confusion in the ranks of the enemy, who took shelter behind a warehouse, from whence they fired rockets; but a few well directed shots, drove them from this position. A flanking party, concealed by the banks and bushes, pushed up the river to turn our left, whilst a strong force attempted the bridge; but the incessant and well directed fire from our artillery and riflemen at the battery, occasioned evident confusion amongst their ranks, so much so, that their officers could be seen actively engaged preventing their retreating, and pushing them on to the bridge; and here I think the enemy suffered considerably. At length they succeeded in passing the bridge in small parties, at full speed, which formed after cross-

sing. I had ordered forty horsemen with axes to cut away this bridge before the near approach of the enemy, and saw them with their axes. Why this order was not executed, I never could learn. It is certain, the enemy could have forded the stream above; but I considered it would, in some degree, impede their progress, and give our artillery and riflemen more time and opportunity to act with effect against them.

The artillery under the command of captains Myers and Magruder, and the riflemen, the whole under the command of Major Pinkney, behaved in the most gallant manner; (this gallant officer in the course of the action was severely wounded) but the superior force of the enemy, and the rapidity with which he moved, compelled them to retire; but one of the pieces was lost, and this was rendered harmless before it was abandoned.

The enemy took every advantage of the cover afforded them by the trees of the orchard, and their light troops from thence kept up a galling fire on our line. On this party, when advanced nearer, the fifth regiment, under colonel Sterret, opened a steady and well directed fire, which was followed by the fire from the right, and ultimately from our centre, when the firing on both sides became general. After a few rounds, the troops on the right began to break. I rode along the line, and gave orders to the officers to cut down those who attempted to fly, and suffer no man to leave the lines. On arriving at the left of the centre regiment, I found lieutenant colonel Shutez's men giving way, and that brave officer, with major Kemp, aided by my aid de camp, major Woodyear, exerting themselves in rallying and forming them again. Captain Gallaway's company, and part of captains Randall's and Showers' companies were rallied and formed again, and behaved gallantly. The rest of colonels Shutez's and Ragan's regiments fled in disorder, notwithstanding the extraordinary exertions of their officers to prevent it. On the left,

I soon after discovered a part of the fifth regiment giving way, and that excellent officer lieutenant colonel Sterret, with those under him, most actively engaged forming them again. Soon after, the retreat became general, and all attempts to rally them, and make a second stand, were fruitless. With a body of United States cavalry, I endeavored to protect the rear and right of the retreating men, so as to prevent their falling into the enemy's possession.

The men under my command were worn down and nearly exhausted from long and forced marches, want of food, and watching. They had been, with very little intermission, under arms and marching from the time of their departure from Baltimore, with but little sleep, bad provisions, and but little opportunity to cook. They certainly were not in a situation to go into battle; but my orders were positive, and I was determined to obey them.

Before, and during the action, I did not see any of the force I was led to expect would support me. I understood since, they were on their way to my assistance, and I presume exertions were made to bring them up.

Before and during the retreat, I heard the thunder of commodore Barney's artillery; but till then I did not know he was near. I believe there were few, if any other troops on the field when the action commenced, than the three regiments of infantry under lieutenant colonels Sterret, Ragan and Shutez, major Pinkney's battalion of riflemen, captains Myer's and Magruder's companies of artillery, amounting to about 2,150, exclusive of two regiments of cavalry, who did not act.

General Winder, on the field of battle, displayed all possible zeal, activity, and personal bravery, in encouraging the men to fight, and after they broke, in his exertions to rally them.

I saw the president and some of the heads of departments in the field, but did not perceive that any

of them took any part in the arrangement made for battle. Colonel Monroe, the then secretary of state, appeared extremely active in his efforts to aid the officers in the discharge of their duties, and exposed himself to much danger.

To my aid de camp, major Edward G. Woodyear, and my acting brigade major, maj. Beal Randal, I am much indebted for their unremitted exertions in encouraging the men before and during the action, and the zeal displayed by them in their attempts to keep the ranks unbroken, and to rally the men, in which they in some degree succeeded; for the company of captain Gallaway, and part of Shower's, and Randal's, were rallied, and were among the last troops who left the field, and did not retreat until directed: some of them were killed and several severely wounded.

On arriving at the city, with part of colonel Laval's United States cavalry covering the retreat, and collecting the rear of our scattered troops, I found general Winder's command had passed through it, towards Georgetown. I proceeded there, and then followed to a village a few miles beyond it, where I overtook him with troops collecting under his command, and some of those of my brigade. The army thence proceeded to Montgomery court house on the 25th of August, where it was hourly reinforced by those who fled from the field.

As there had been no place assigned by the commanding general previous to the action, to which the men should retreat in case of a defeat, many of those under my immediate command, had fled from the field towards Baltimore. On the 25th I directed my aid, major Woodyear, to push on from Montgomery court house to that place, organize the drafted men, and bring them on to any point that general Winder should direct.

On Friday, August 26th, at about 10 o'clock A. M. we took up the line of march from Montgomery court

house on the road leading to Baltimore, with United States infantry under lieutenant colonel Scott; major Peter's corps of artillery; general Smith's brigade of district troops; the regiment of militia from Annapolis and Anne Arundel county, commanded by lieutenant colonels Beall and Hood; some riflemen from Frederick, Allegany, and other places; a large body of cavalry and part of my brigade of drafted militia; a force respectable as to numbers and appearance; and that night encamped about half way between Montgomery court house and Ellicott's upper mills. General Winder having received some information respecting the enemy, indicating intentions of moving against Baltimore, concluded his presence there was indispensable. He set out for that place, leaving me in command of the army, with direction to follow him in the morning. Colonel Monroe was with us.

During this night several expresses arrived from the city of Washington, by whom I was informed of the retreat of the enemy, said to be in such haste and confusion, that many of their soldiers were straggling about in every direction; that the main army, after reaching Bladensburg, had taken the road to Marlborough, leaving their wounded. I ordered the cavalry to follow them, harass their rear, and pick up the stragglers. Reports from Georgetown and the city reached me, that the arms of many of the enemy had fallen into the hands of the blacks, and it was apprehended that they would take advantage of the absence of the men to insult the females, and complete the work of destruction commenced by the enemy; and at the earnest solicitation of brigadier gen. Smith and major Peter, who expressed much anxiety respecting their families, and considering it all important to prevent further injury to the city, I ordered the troops of the district of Columbia to move thither for its protection.

Having ascertained that the enemy had retreated to their shipping, I ordered the Prince George's troops

down to Bladensburg, and those under the command of lieutenant colonels Beall and Hood, to remain encamped on the ground then occupied, until they had orders from general Winder; and in the morning of the 27th, with the United States infantry, my brigade, and part of colonel Lavall's cavalry, marched for Baltimore in a very heavy rain. On my arrival there in the evening, I waited on gen. Winder, and detailed to him what I had done since he left me, with which he appeared well pleased.

Before I conclude, I must observe that major Pinkney, with most of his battalion, and part of the two companies of artillery, retired from their advanced position to the left of the 5th regiment, and with that regiment continued to behave with that gallantry which had distinguished them in the onset, and only retired when pressed by superior numbers, and then, as I am informed, by orders from the commanding general.

TOBIAS E. STANSBURY.

Hon. R. M. Johnson, chairman, &c. &c.

General W. Smith's statement.

Camp, Washington, October 6, 1814.

Hon. R. M. Johnson,

SIR—In compliance with the request contained in your favor of the 28th ult. enclosing copy of a resolution of the hon. the house of representatives of the United States, appointing a committee to investigate the causes which led to the success of the enemy in his late enterprise against this city, I have the honor respectfully to submit, for the consideration of the committee, the following detailed report, as connected with the inquiry, and embracing, as you wish, a view of the numbers, the movements, the conduct, and disposition of the troops of Washington and Georgetown, under my command, from the period they were called into service until the 24th of August, the disastrous day of battle at Bladensburg, together with such facts and circumstances relative to the subject as present themselves.

Late at night, on the 18th August, I received orders to call out the whole of the brigade under my command, to rendezvous on the evening of the following day on the banks of the Tiber, in Washington, and to report to general Winder. The troops assembled according to orders, but being deficient in many essential supplies for actual service, were, after an inspection, dismissed until the ensuing morning, the 20th, when every exertion on the part of the officers being made to perfect their equipment, they moved off from the capitol about 3 P. M. crossed the Eastern Branch, and halted four miles therefrom, on the road leading to Nottingham. They were here overtaken by the baggage, when it was ascertained there was a great deficiency of necessary camp equipage, the public stores being exhausted; many of the troops

were compelled to lay out in the open field; and of the essential article of flints, upon a requisition of 1000, only 200 could be had. Means were immediately adopted to supply the latter defect from private resources, the former was never accomplished. On the following morning, the 21st, the militia companies deficient in numbers were consolidated, and the supernumerary officers detached to bring up delinquents. The force on the ground amounted to about 1070, comprised into two regiments, commanded by colonels Magruder and Brent, and consisting of the following description of troops; two companies of artillery, 12 six pounders, and 210 men; two companies of riflemen, nominally, *but armed with muskets*, the secretary of war having declined or refused to furnish rifles, 170 men; one company of grenadiers, 40 men; and five companies of light infantry, about 250 men; in all about 670 of volunteers, the residue common militia. Having here done all that could be done for the organization of the troops and to enable them to move with celerity, they were, according to previous orders from general Winder, put in motion, and after a hot and fatiguing march, encamped that evening after dusk near the Wood Yard. At this place I found the United States' 36th regiment, lieutenant colonel Scott, about 350 strong, and a squadron of cavalry under the command of lieutenant colonel Tilghman; the latter soon after moved off to reconnoitre on the different roads between the Wood Yard, Marlboro', and Nottingham. Whilst the troops were occupying the ground, I received a message from general Winder, then at the Wood Yard, requesting an interview at his quarters; after which I returned to camp at 9 o'clock, and again, at his request, joined him at 12, where colonel Monroe soon after arrived with the intelligence of the ar-

rival at Nottingham, (distant about 12 miles,) of the enemy in considerable force, both by land and water. I received orders immediately to return to camp and hold the troops in readiness to march at the shortest notice, and was instructed by general Winder to direct lieutenant colonel Scott, of the 36th United States' regiment, to get his men immediately under arms, and to march according to orders previously given him. I reached the camp about two o'clock A. M. the troops were roused, the tents struck, the baggage wagons, loaded and the men got immediately under arms, and so remained until sunrise the 22d, when general Winder arrived and directed an advance corps to be formed and march immediately, to consist of about 300 men, artillerists and infantry. This was promptly done, and placed under the direction of major Peter, consisting of his own artillery, captain Davidson's light infantry, and captain Stull's rifle corps, *armed with muskets*. They moved immediately on the road to Nottingham, and were soon after followed by the main body to support them. Major Peter with the advance corps moved on for four or five miles, when he fell in with colonel Lavall's cavalry, a part of colonel Tilghman's, and the 36th United States' regiment, retiring. The troops were halted, and a position taken to repel the enemy, now rapidly approaching. General Winder here joined our troops, and soon after orders were given to fall back, which was done. The main body had meanwhile arrived at a position within two miles of the advance, where they found the marine corps under the command of captain Miller, with five pieces of heavy artillery, judiciously posted.

This position not being deemed favorable for the infantry, they were directed to rest on their

arms, whilst I rode briskly forward to discover one more adapted to them; but none presented, except for light troops, a body of which was thrown in advance into the woods, and the residue of the troops disposed of to act according to circumstances. Here we received advice, about 11 o'clock, of the advance of the enemy and of the retiring of our troops, and immediately after, orders from general Winder to send off the baggage from where it had been left in the morning, to the "Long Old Fields," and for the troops to retire slowly upon the same road. About this time, successive heavy explosions from the direction of Marlboro', announced the destruction of commodore Barney's flotilla, which was known to be in that vicinity, and also that this course would be adopted, should the enemy approach in such force, by land and water, as to render resistance unavailing. It was hence inferred, that the enemy had ascended the Patuxent in force, that a column of troops had co-operated, by taking the road in that direction; which was soon afterwards confirmed, and with the advices subsequently, that the whole of their army had filed off on that road, and taken possession of Marlboro'. Our troops halted, and assembled at the fork of the roads, on this side of the Wood Yard, one of which leads to Malboro', the other to this place. We here fell in with commodore Barney and his sailors, and after a short rest, the whole moved on, and about 4 P. M. arrived at the Long Old Fields. Here, pursuant to directions from general Winder, I assumed the command of the assembled forces, those of commodore Barney excepted, consisting now of the following troops, viz: District volunteers and militia, 1070; lieutenant colonel Scott's 36th U. S. regiment, 350; lieutenant colonel Cramer's batta-

lion of drafted militia, 240; and major Waring's battalion of Prince George's militia, about 150; total about 1800 men. An encampment was formed for the night, and such positions taken as were best calculated to resist a night attack; the cavalry being already stationed in advance, on the different roads leading to Marlboro', with orders to keep patrolling parties constantly upon the enemy's quarters, and to advise of all his movements. The troops being greatly fatigued, sought in sleep that repose they so much wanted; in this they were disappointed: an alarm gun aroused them about 2 o'clock in the morning of the 23d; they were quickly formed in front of their encampment, and dispositions made to meet and repel the expected attack, but in a short time it was ascertained to be a false alarm, and the troops were dismissed, but with orders to hold themselves ready for their posts at a moment's warning. At daylight general Winder gave orders to have the tents struck, and the baggage wagons loaded, and that the whole should be ready to move in one hour. Those orders were complied with, with all possible expedition. Shortly after the troops were got under arms, and were joined by another small detachment of Prince George's militia, under the command of major Maynard, about 150. The whole were held ready to move according to orders. About this time, I received directions from general Winder to have formed an advance corps, constructed as the one of the preceding day, and to be prepared to move as his subsequent orders should designate. Peter's, Davidson's, and Stull's companies were again selected for this purpose, and formed accordingly. The president of the United States, accompanied by the secretary of war, and others of his cabinet, now came upon

the ground, and reviewed the troops. About 10 o'clock, general Winder left the camp, accompanied by, and having under his command or direction, several troops of cavalry, intending to reconnoitre on the road leading from Marlboro' to Bladensburg, as well as to be situated in a position where he might more conveniently communicate with the troops expected from Baltimore, leaving directions that I should report to him at the Cross Roads, it being the intersection of a road, proceeding from the Old Fields, and crossing the before mentioned road, about five miles distant. His orders were, that the advance troops should move forward in the direction of Marlboro', reconnoitre the enemy, approach him as near as possible, without running too much risk, and to annoy him, either in his position or in his movements, by all the means in their power, and that I should remain with the main body at the Old Fields, and act according to the intelligence I should receive of the movements of the enemy; if they moved upon Bladensburg, by the road before mentioned, that I should approach them by the intersecting road from the Old Fields, and attack their left flank, or, if upon the road we now occupied, that we should make the best possible dispositions in our power, and receive him there, unless circumstances imperiously forbid; otherwise, to retire by a road in our rear to Bladensburg or to Washington, as, at the time, should seem most advisable. In conformity with this arrangement, major Peter with the advance corps, and with captain Caldwell's cavalry, which had joined us, marched about 11 o'clock. About a quarter of a mile in front of our then camp, the road forks, both leading to Marlboro': one, the main stage road, by which the distance was about eight miles, the other

turning to the left, a more direct route, but not so good a road, about six miles. This last mentioned road was taken by our advancing troops. The commander was instructed to report every hour. The residue of our troops were dismissed to refresh. From this period until 2 o'clock, several deserters and prisoners were brought into camp, and I was engaged in examining them, when intelligence was received from major Peter that the enemy had left Marlboro', and were advancing rapidly upon the road which we then occupied, in great force; that, according to his estimation of their column, and the best information he could obtain, their force was not less than six thousand men; that he had had a skirmish with them, in which they had endeavored to outflank him; and that he was then retiring before them. A part of colonel Lavall's cavalry having then joined us, were immediately detached to cover the retreat, and the whole of our troops ordered under arms. Confering with commodore Barney on the subject, I proposed making a stand in our then position, with which, with his characteristic gallantry, he promptly acquiesced, professing his willingness to co-operate in any measures that might be deemed most adviseable. The troops were immediately formed in order of battle, extending nearly a quarter of a mile on each side of the road: those of commodore Barney, with his heavy artillery, the marines under captain Miller, and the 36th U. S. regiment, being posted on the right of the road, the district troops, and the residue of those attached to them, on the left. Our advanced troops, as they arrived, taking their stations in the line, and the artillery, in which it was ascertained we were greatly their superior, and for which the ground was admirably adapted, so posted, as to have the best effect; in-

deed so strong did we deem our position in front, that we were apprehensive that the enemy, upon viewing us, would forbear to assail us by daylight, or that, availing of his numbers, he would endeavor to outflank us. To guard against this last, parties of light troops and cavalry were detached to cover both flanks. We remained thus, two or three hours, calmly awaiting the approach of the enemy, our videts successively announcing his continued progress. About 5 P. M. general Winder, who had been apprised of the approach of the enemy, arrived in camp. He examined the different positions, and approved of them, but the day being now nearly spent, and it being ascertained that the enemy had not arrived within a distance in which he would now, probably, be able to make his attack, whilst it lasted, and it being deemed unadvisable to receive a night attack there, when our advantage of artillery would be unavailing, he gave the orders to retire about sunset, and the whole of the troops, much wearied and exhausted, encamped, late in the night, within this city.

Thus terminated the four days of service of the troops of this district, preceding the affair at Bladensburg. They had been under arms, with but little intermission, the whole of the time, both night and day; had traversed, during their different marches in advance and retreat, a considerable tract of country, exposed to the burning heat of a sultry sun by day, and many of them to the cold dews of the night, uncovered. They had, in this period, drawn but two rations, the requisition therefor, in the first instance, having been but partially complied with, and it being afterwards almost impossible to procure the means of transportation, the wagons employed by our quartermaster for

that purpose being constantly impressed by the government agents, for the purpose of removing the public records, when the enemy's approach was known, and some of them thus seized whilst proceeding to take in provisions for the army.

Those hardships and privations could not but be severely distressing to men, the greater part of whom possessed and enjoyed at home the means of comfortable living, and from their usual habits and pursuits in life, but ill qualified to endure them. They, however, submitted without murmuring, evincing by their patience, their zeal, and the promptitude with which they obeyed every order, a magnanimity highly honorable to their character. Great as was their merit in this respect, it was no less so in the spirit manifested whenever an order was given to march to meet the foe; and at the "Long Old Fields," where his attack was momentarily expected in overwhelming force, they displayed, in presence of many spectators, although scarce any of them had ever been in action, a firmness, a resolution, and an intrepidity, which, whatever might have been the result, did honor to their country.

On Wednesday morning, the 24th August, at 11 A. M. I received orders from general Winder to detach one piece of artillery and one company of infantry, to repair to the Eastern Branch Bridge, and there report to colonel Wadsworth; and to proceed with the residue of the troops to Bladensburg and take a position to support general Stansbury. This order was put in immediate execution, and the troops for Bladensburg moved off with all the expedition of which they were capable. Having put them in motion I passed on ahead, in order that I might select my position against their arrival. I found general Stansbury

posted on the west side of the Eastern Branch, his right resting on the main road, distant from the bridge at Bladensburg five or six hundred yards, and extending northeastwardly, his left approaching nearer to the creek. An extensive apple orchard was in his front, and one hundred to two hundred yards in advance, a work thrown up, commanding the bridge, occupied by a corps of artilleryists, with five or six pieces, and appeared to be supported by some rifle and light companies. In his rear, on the right, was a thick undergrowth of wood, and directly behind that a deep hollow or ravine, open or cleared, of about sixty yards in width, which the main road crosses. The ravine terminates on the left in a bold acclivity, about two hundred yards from the road; the rest of the ground in his rear was open, unbroken, and gradually ascending fields. Having hastily examined the grounds, and concluded on the dispositions I should make, I apprised general Stansbury of my views, as to the troops under my command, suggesting, that if his line should be forced, and he could again form on my left, that the nature of the ground there would be favorable for a renewal of the action, which might then become general. By this time we received advice that the enemy were near Bladensburg, and I left him to hasten the arrival of my troops. They moved rapidly on, notwithstanding the excessive heat of the day, covered with clouds of dust, and were promptly disposed of as follows:

Lieutenant colonel Scott, with the 36th United States' regiment, was posted in a field on the left of the road, his right resting upon it, and commanding the road descending into the ravine beforementioned, in the rear of general Stansbury's right, and the rest of his line commanding the ascent

from the ravine. This position was about one hundred and fifty yards in the rear of the front line, but extending to the right. In the same field, about one hundred yards in the rear of the 36th regiment, colonel Magruder was posted with a part of the 1st regiment of district militia, his right also resting upon the road, the left advanced, presenting a front obliquely to the road, and situated to cover and to co-operate with the 36th regiment; major Peter, with his artillery, 6 six pounders; captain Davidson's light infantry, and captain Stull's rifle corps, *armed with muskets*, all of the same regiment, were ordered to take possession of the abrupt acclivity beforementioned, terminating the ravine. This was deemed a desirable position, because it commanded completely the ravine and the road crossing it, and a considerable extent of the ground over which the front line would necessarily retire if forced back; but, after a short space of time, report was made to me, that broken grounds interrupted the approach to it with artillery, but by a circuitous route that would consume much time, and that, in case of retreat, the ground in the rear was such as might endanger the safety of the guns. It was mentioned at the same time, that near to it was a commanding position for artillery, and easy of access from and to the road. I yielded with reluctance to the abandonment of the position first ordered, but time did not admit of hesitation. Meanwhile I had posted lieutenant colonel Cramer, with his battalion of Maryland drafted militia, in the woods, on the right of the road, and commanding the ravine which continued in that direction, with orders, that if forced, he should retire by his right, through a body of woods in that direction, and rally and form with

the troops stationed in the rear, on the extreme right. Upon examining the position taken by major Peter's battery, it was found that the range of his guns was principally through that part of the field occupied by the 36th regiment.—To remove one or the other became necessary, and the difficulty of the ground for moving artillery, and the exigency of the movement, left no alternative. The 36th fell back about one hundred yards, losing, in some measure, the advantage of its elevated ground, and leaving the road. The position of the 1st regiment district militia, from this circumstance, was also necessarily changed. It fell back about the same distance, its right still resting on the road, and now formed, nearly in line with the 36th. Of the 2d regiment district militia, two pieces of artillery and one company of riflemen, armed with muskets, were, by directions of general Winder, sent on to the front, with those he flanked the extreme left of the front line; two pieces more of artillery were posted in the road near the bridge at Bladensburg; the residue of that regiment, about three hundred and fifty strong, under the command of colonel Brent, was formed as a reserve a short distance in the rear of major Peter's battery, and so disposed as to act on the right, or left or in front, as occasion might require — Near them was posted, in the same manner, major Waring's Prince George's battalion of militia, about one hundred and fifty. Colonel William D. Beall, with a regiment of troops from Annapolis, passed through Bladensburg as our troops arrived, and took a position on the right of the road and nearly fronting it, a distance about two hundred and fifty yards. Previous to the arrival of the troops on the ground, general Winder came up from the city, and being made acquainted with the

intended dispositions of the troops, as well as the ground reserved for commodore Barney and the marines, approved of and confirmed them.

About half past twelve o'clock, and whilst the troops were yet taking their different positions, innumerable rockets thrown from the heights of Bladensburg, announced the arrival of the enemy there; and at this period, commodore Barney's sailors and marines, in quick march, arrived, and took possession of the ground previously assigned them, his artillery being posted in and near the road upon its right, commanding the road and open field in front, and his infantry, together with the marines under captain Miller, extending to the right, thus occupying the interval of ground between colonel Magruder's first regiment district militia, and colonel Beall's Maryland regiment.

The firing of artillery in front soon commenced, and immediately after, that of musketry, in quick and rapid succession. In a few minutes the whole right and centre of the front line, with some small exceptions, were seen retiring in disorder and confusion. The firing still continued on the extreme left, but shortly after, it also broke, and although it retired in more order, yet none could be rallied so as to renew the action with effect, and also soon entirely quit the field.

Meanwhile the left of the enemy in heavy column, passed along the road crossing the ravine. They were here encountered by the troops of colonel Cramer, posted in the woods on the edge of the ravine. These, after a short conflict, were compelled to retire, which they did principally under cover of the adjacent woods, and formed with the troops of colonel Beall on the right. The enemy's column now displayed in the field on the right of the road. They here became exposed to the

oblique fire of major Peter's battery, which was kept up with great animation. Still pressing on to the front of our right, they came in contact with the heavy artillery of commodore Barney, and of the troops posted there. Here the firing became tremendous. They were repulsed, again returned to the charge, succeeded in forcing the troops on the right, and finally carried the position of commodore Barney.

The dispersion of the front line caused a dangerous opening on our left, of which the enemy in that quarter promptly availed. He advanced rapidly, then wheeling on his left soon gained and was turning our left flank. To oppose this alarming movement, I directed colonel Brent, with the second regiment of district militia, to take a position still more to the left, and he was proceeding in the execution of this order, when orders came from general Winder for the whole of the troops to retreat. The efforts of the enemy had hitherto been directed principally against the right and left of our whole line of battle. The troops of this district and a part of those attached to them, occupying positions mostly in the centre, and some of them difficult of access, were consequently but partially engaged, and this principally with light troops and skirmishers, now pressing forward, supported by a column of infantry.

I here beg leave to refer to the reports of colonels Brent and Thompson, Nos. 1 and 2, showing the positions and the part taken by their respective commands during the action.

The order to retreat was executed by regiments and corps, as they had been formed, and with as much order as the nature of the ground would permit. The first and second regiments halted and formed, after retreating five to six hundred

paces, but were again ordered by general Winder to retire. At this moment I fell in with general Winder, and, after a short conference with him, was directed to move on and collect the troops, and prepare to make a stand on the heights westward of the turnpike gate. This was done as fast as the troops came up. A front was again presented towards the enemy, consisting principally of the troops of this district, a part of those who had been attached to them in the action, and a Virginia regiment of about four hundred men, under colonel Minor, which met us at this place. Whilst the line was yet forming, I received orders from general Winder to fall back to the capitol, and there form for battle. I took the liberty of suggesting my impression of the preferable situation we then occupied, but expecting that he might be joined there by some of the dispersed troops of the front line, he chose to make the stand there. Approaching the capitol, I halted the troops and requested his orders, as to the formation of the line. We found no auxiliaries there. He then conferred for a few moments with general Armstrong, who was a short distance from us, and then gave orders that the whole should retreat through Washington and Georgetown. It is impossible to do justice to the anguish evinced by the troops of Washington and Georgetown, on the receiving of this order. The idea of leaving their families, their houses, and their homes, at the mercy of an enraged enemy, was insupportable. To preserve that order which was maintained during the retreat, was now no longer practicable. As they retired through Washington and Georgetown, numbers were obtaining and taking leave to visit their homes, and again rejoining; and with ranks thus broken and scattered, they halted at night on the heights near

Tenly Town, and on the ensuing day, assembled at Montgomery court house.

I have thus, sir, given a detailed, and what will, I apprehend, in many respects, be deemed too minute an account, of the short tour of service of the district troops under my command, which preceded the capture of this capital. I fear its length may trespass too much on the patience of your honorable committee. I thought it, however, due to the occasion, and conformable to the spirit and purport of your inquiries. I had another object. The troops of Washington and Georgetown have been assailed in the public prints and otherwise, with calumnies as unmerited as they are cruel and wanton. They have heard of them with indignant astonishment. Conscious that in no instance have they been wanting in the duty they owed to their country or to themselves, but, on the contrary, in obedience to the call of their government, have, with alacrity, obeyed its orders, and intrepidly fronted an enemy vastly their superior in force, and never yielded the ground to him, but by orders emanating from superior authority, they cannot restrain the feelings excited by such manifest, such unprovoked injustice. They have seen with satisfaction the resolution of congress to inquire into this subject, and persuaded of the justice and impartiality of your honorable committee, entertain a confident assurance that the result of your investigation will afford relief to their injured feelings. Connected with this subject, I beg leave to refer to a letter of general Winder, No. 3, in answer to an inquiry made of him, as to the general conduct of the brigade whilst under his command.

I have the honor to be, &c.

W. SMITH,

Brig. gen. 1st Columbian brigade.

P. S. I ought to have mentioned that parts of two companies of the United States' twelfth and thirty eighth regiments, were attached to the thirty-sixth regiment, under lieutenant colonel Scott. Previous to the march to Bladensburg, eighty men of his command had been stationed near the Eastern Branch Bridge, and did not join until after the action. His force then was less than three hundred men.

W. S.

Brigadier general Robert Young's statement.

Alexandria, October 3, 1814.

SIR—In compliance with your letter of the 28th of September, written in pursuance of a resolution adopted by the house of representatives of the United States, requiring such information as may be in my power to give, more especially the part assigned my command, my numbers, orders, movements, and dispositions, previous and subsequent to the 24th of August last, and on that day, as also the conduct of my officers and men, their ideas upon the subject of the enemy's numbers, their confidence in success, and whether any thing like a panic prevailed, with such other views as it may be in my power to communicate, pertinent to an impartial investigation of the subject:

I have the honor respectfully to report, that since the declaration of war, I am enabled, with great truth, to say, that the officers and a great portion of the privates of my command, have manifested to me every disposition to defend the district of Columbia from the approach of the enemy, and this disposition has been communicated to the secretary of war, requesting to be furnished with the necessary means of enabling the militia under my command to do so with effect.

On or about the 25th of July, 1814, general Winder visited the town of Alexandria, and was made acquainted with most of the officers of my brigade, and at that interview mentioned his intention of having a general inspection of the brigade; the men were accordingly assembled, on the 1st day of August, under an order of general Van Ness, when general Winder attended and inspected the brigade, minutely, in person; and I beg leave here to remark, that on general Winder's first visit to the town of Alexandria, he was furnished, by an officer of my brigade, with a topographical sketch of the river Potomac, from a place called Indian Head, about twenty-three miles below Alexandria, containing the course of the river, the depth of the water, width of the channel at particular places, and pointing out Indian Head as the first proper point of defence against an approach of the enemy by water; the White House as the second point of defence; and suggesting a plan of increasing the defence at Fort Warburton: this was done with an understanding, that general Winder would receive any communication upon that subject, in writing, from any of the inhabitants of Alexandria.

On the 18th day of August last, I received orders from general Van Ness to order out immediately the whole of my brigade, to encamp at some convenient place, and report myself to general Winder, which order was obeyed. See No 1.

On the same day I received orders from the same officer to detach two troops of cavalry attached to my brigade, to rendezvous at Bladensburg the next day, at 4 o'clock in the morning, to attend colonel Monroe, secretary of state, and be subject to his particular orders, which was complied with, as will appear by document No. 2.

On the 20th of August, I was directed by general Winder to hold my brigade ready to move at a moment's warning, with ammunition and a supply of three days' provisions, as will appear by No. 3; and on the same day, about 4 o'clock P M I received orders from the same officer to cross the Potomac, without delay, at Rozier's Ferry, and take a position on the most convenient spot adjacent thereto, encamp, and there await further orders. See No. 4.

I accordingly the same evening took up my line of march, with the remaining part of my brigade, containing in the whole, officers and privates included, 454 strong I had with me 2 brass six pounders, 1 brass four pounder, and attempted to take 2 long twelve pounders, belonging to the corporation of Alexandria; but found them too unwieldy to move, with our means, across the river, and returned them. I was, at first, accompanied by a company of marine artillery, composed of volunteers from the seafaring persons in Alexandria; but the difficulty of transporting the twelve pounders occasioned several of them to return; the others remained with a brass four pounder, and joined the artillery commanded by captain Griffith On the 21st of August, I received orders to move with my detachment at revellie the next morning, and pitch my tents at the most convenient spot, nigh Piscataway, between that place and the Wood Yard, and there await further orders, which was complied with. See No. 5.

On the 22d of August, I received orders to fall back with my detachment, and take the most convenient position on the road from Piscataway to Washington, to defend the approach from below to Fort Warburton. This order was complied with, see No. 6; and here we received information

of the approach of the enemy from the Patuxent towards Washington; and also of the approach of the fleet coming up the Potomac, and of their having passed the Kettle Bottoms. I accordingly took a strong position on a height called Hatton's Hill, near the head of Piscataway creek, about three miles in the rear of Fort Waburton, reviewed the ground of the fort, which is favorable for a small number to defend against a greater, and made a disposition of the brigade in case of an attack, and communicated the information, and marked the ground, and made known to the troops their respective posts in the line in case of an attack, in doing which both officers and privates exhibited to me the strongest and most determined resolution to make a proper and successful resistance. I saw no wavering or want of confidence, nor any symptoms of panic.

On the 23d of August, I received information from colonel Tayloe, of the cavalry, that he had in charge to inform me, that general Smith's brigade was retreating to Washington, and the enemy pursuing rapidly, and in case we were compelled to retreat, the mayor of Alexandria would send every boat that could be had to Fort Washington or Rozier's Ferry, for the purpose of transporting the troops across the Potomac. See No. 7.

On the receipt of this letter, I addressed one to general Winder, by my brigade major, informing him of its contents, and observed, that as colonel Tayloe did not say from whom he had the charge, I requested that he would please give major Triplett his orders on the subject. See No. 8. On the morning of the 24th August, I received a message from general Winder, by assistant adjutant general Hite, directing me to take up my line of march, and move on the road from Piscata-

way to the Eastern Branch Bridge, and take a position at the Cross Roads; and send out videts towards Warlboro' and the city, to watch the movements of the enemy, then on their march, about ——— miles on our flank. Our position was on Oxen Hill, where major Hite again visited us, on his return from Fort Waburton.

On our march, and when the brigade had advanced about three miles, major Triplett returned with orders from general Winder, directing the brigade to cross to the Virginia shore, in the boats which were directed to be left at the fort, for the purpose of crossing troops, and if the boats were not there to retire on to Washington, but in case we could cross the river, to fall into the road through which the Virginia troops would pass, and co operate with them, unless the advance of the enemy up the river should make it necessary to retire on Alexandria; and if there should be no Virginia troops retiring, to fall back immediately to Alexandria, and act in the best manner for the defence of that place, or retreating to Washington, if necessary, and leaving a latitude in case of events, to pursue such measures as would best secure us from disaster. See No. 9. Soon after the receipt of this letter, we were advised of the approach of the enemy up the river, above Port Tobacco; and I was also advised that the enemy were, that morning, advanced of Warlboro', about five miles; and without perceiving any want of steadiness in my men, I determined, in obedience to orders, to cross the Potomac to the town of Alexandria, at Rozier's Ferry, and sent for the boats left at the fort, and also for boats from Alexandria, which were immediately sent in a great abundance; and after some part of the brigade had embarked and left the shore, I received

orders from general Armstrong, dated the 24th of August, but whether written before or subsequent to that of general Winder, I was unable to ascertain, informing me that the most the enemy did the day before, was to move about two miles in advance of Marlboro', and that the ships in the Potomac had no troops; and directing me to hold my present post until assured that the enemy was in force and about to attack me, or until I should receive further orders; and to keep my videts well posted on every road. See No. 10.

I accordingly recalled the troops embarked, and resumed my position back of Oxen Hill, on the road leading to the Eastern Branch Bridge, and near its junction with the road leading to Marlboro', and sent out my videts on each road. We were at this moment apprised of the enemy's being on his march to Bladensburg, and soon after, by the commencement of the action, which was distinctly heard; the videts soon returned and gave me information of the Eastern Branch Bridge being blown up, and others, of the retreat of our troops through Washington. I had, in this interval, despatched the trooper who brought me general Armstrong's letter, with an answer, informing him that I had, in obedience to his letter, returned to my position on the heights back of Oxen Hill, and should there wait further orders.

The trooper, with great despatch, returned, and informed me that he could not see general Armstrong, but had inquired of the president and general Winder, both of whom he met with the army, retreating through Washington city, and they being unable to give any information of him, general Winder despatched the same trooper back with verbal orders for my brigade to cross the Potomac, and form a junction with his army

in Montgomery county, Maryland. I accordingly crossed the troops over to Alexandria, on the night of the 24th of August, and took a position a small distance in the rear of Alexandria, and during the night and next morning, crossed my artillery and baggage. I had sent a videt into the city of Washington, and learnt that the enemy were in possession, and were firing the public buildings. I took up my line of march for Conns' Ferry, a small distance above the Great Falls of the Potomac, and immediately opposite Montgomery court house, where I was informed general Win-der's army then were. The troops were, on the 26th, delayed on their march near Carper's Mills, opposite the Great Falls of the Potomac, by an alarm of a domestic nature, which I was credulous enough to give credence to, from respectability of the country people who came to me for protection, and I accordingly halted the brigade, and sent out my light troops, and one troop of cavalry, which had joined me from Fauquier, to ascertain the fact, which finally proved erroneous. See letter No. 12, from the mayor of Alexandria.

On my passing the road which led to the Little Falls' Bridge, I was apprised, by a videt, that the enemy's picquets were still in view from Georgetown, and by several persons from the city, that I was in danger of being cut off, should the enemy make a sally out across the Little Falls' Bridge, which determined me to pursue my original intention, and not pass the bridge.

On the evening of the 27th of August, I crossed my troops over the Potomac, at Conns' Ferry, and the river being rocky, and but one boat, and owing to high winds, I was unable to pass the artillery and baggage across until late in the evening of the 28th of August, when I immediately de-

spatched a videt to general Winder, informing him of my movements, and that I should continue my march to reach his camp, unless otherwise ordered. See No. 12.

About one o'clock of the night of the 28th, I received an order from colonel Monroe, secretary of state, informing me that the British squadron had passed the fort, and was approaching the city; that the fort surrendered without opposition; and that the president of the United States desired that I should move with all possible despatch for Georgetown, to be in a situation to aid either Alexandria or the city, as circumstances might require. See No. 13. I soon after took up my line of march, and reached Georgetown, distant about twenty miles, at half past twelve o'clock, and were marched to the city, and encamped near the president's house, in full view of the enemy's fleet, lying at the town of Alexandria.

On the 31st of August, I was ordered to march across the Potomac, and join general Hungerford, from whence the brigade was marched to the White House. See No. 14. It may be proper for me here to remark, that on my route to Conns' Ferry, I gave directions for moving two twelve pounders, belonging to the corporation of Alexandria, out of the enemy's reach, and on my march to the White House I carried them with me, and caused to be removed from the gun house in Alexandria, and while it was in possession of the enemy, the screws, sponges, rammers, and apparatus, belonging to the guns, as also the powder from the powder-house, and, as facts are better than opinions, permit me to bring in view the artillery so handsomely mentioned by captain Porter. Two of the infantry killed and two wounded that had been detailed under the command of captain Jan-

na, show the materials of the brigade from which they were drawn; the rifle corps were also on the flank of battery and did their duty, and more to their honor, from knowing that their arms had previously been condemned. Whilst the troops lay at the White House, some opportunity was afforded me during the bombardment of that fort, as well as on the day the enemy's fleet passed it, from the quantity of large and grape shot and rockets which fell among them, of forming a correct judgment of their firmness, as well as from the circumstance of the defence of a particular spot having been previously assigned to me and my command, to which, on the first notice of the action, the remainder of the brigade repaired, with a cheerful serenity of mind, free from agitation or appearance of panic, which warranted the highest expectations from them; and considering that the brigade was called into service en masse, drawing persons from all situations in life, on so short a notice, I am happy to say, that they endured fatigue and privation without a murmur; and I most sincerely lament, both for them and myself, that so fair an opportunity should have passed by, an opportunity above all others, which could have presented itself to the mind of an American freeman, the most desirable; that such an opportunity, from circumstances beyond their control, should have passed, without all the officers and privates of the brigade being brought to a more earnest test of their professions and dispositions, both for the honor of their town, themselves, and beloved country. I have the honor to be, &c.

ROBERT YOUNG.

Brig. gen. 2d brigade M. D. C.

The hon. Richard M. Johnson, chairman, &c.

Note. Fort Warburton and Fort Washington is the same place, it being differently called in the different despatches received.

Brigadier general Hugh Douglas' statement

November 20, 1814. Ellicott's Mills.

DEAR SIR — In answer to the inquiry contained in your letter of the 15th, I hasten to inform you that I received the order calling me to Alexandria, and thence to the city of Washington. on the Monday immediately preceding the destruction of the public buildings. This was on the 22d of August. It directed me to march my brigade *immediately* to Washington. In pursuance of these orders, my brigade or rather the greater part of it, marched on the *next day*, the 23d. The residue overtook them on their march.

In relation to the arms I will add—that the Loudon regiments under my command brought on some arms from Virginia, which were partly deposited at Ellicott's Mills, and partly delivered up, to be brought to this place from Baltimore, the troops having met with Harper's Ferry arms, with which those were supplied whose muskets were out of order.

The Fairfax regiment under colonel Minor's command, was armed at Washington, when he was detached from me. From him you may learn *when he arrived in Washington;—at what hour after his arrival he applied for arms;—how long he was delayed, and what were the causes of delay.*

It is not in my power to give further information that I deem material; but as the committee have demanded of me all the information I possess, I feel it my duty to refer them to colonel Minor, whose information in relation to the arming the regiment under his command, and the delays attending it, may be perhaps important

I have the honor to be, dear sir, &c.

HUGH DOUGLAS,

Brigadier general 6th brigade V. M.

Lieutenant colonel Joseph Sterett's statement.

Baltimore, November 22, 1814.

SIR—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt your letter of the 11th instant, and will, with pleasure, give such information as I possess, relative to the unfortunate affair of Bladensburg.

On the 19th August last, the 3d brigade of Maryland militia was called into the service of the United States. On the 20th, the 5th regiment, the rifle battalion, under major Pinkney, and two companies of artillery, under captains Myers and Magruder, making together about 800 men, were ordered by general Stricker to proceed to Bladensburg, under my command, where I was to report myself to general Winder. On the 21st, the whole took up the line of march. At Elk Ridge Landing, I received a communication from general Winder, directing me to proceed to Snowden's by convenient marches, and there await his further orders. As the detachment set out without being completely equipped, I halted at the landing, to give an opportunity for the further supplies to come on. However, on Monday the 22d, about two o'clock P. M. I received an order from general Winder, by express, to advance by forced marches to Bladensburg. The whole of my detachment instantly struck their tents, and with the greatest alacrity, took up the line of march. We arrived at the Buck, or Snowden's, at a late hour, and encamped for the night. Early the next morning we were in motion, and that evening arrived at Bladensburg, where, by order of general Winder, I was placed under the command of general Stansbury. The whole encampment was alarmed about 9 o'clock that night, soon after my detachment had pitched their tents, and before the men could refresh themselves. They, however, formed with cheerfulness and alacrity,

and remained under arms until about one o'clock. We were scarcely dismissed, before we were again called to arms, and about two o'clock were ordered to strike our tents, and finally, before daylight, we marched and crossed the bridge at Bladensburg, and took the road to Washington. We were occasionally halted and advanced, until about 11 o'clock, when we were countermarched and formed in the orchard on the west side of Bladensburg bridge, to await the enemy, who, we were informed, was advancing in full force. I knew nothing of any second line or reserve being formed to support us, and no man of any judgment, acquainted with the fatigued, undisciplined, and inexperienced troops under the command of general Stansbury, could, for a moment, suppose them capable of making a successful resistance to a superior, brave, and veteran enemy, conducted by officers of great experience and high reputation. In this situation, I concurred in opinion with colonel Ragan and major Pinkney, that we ought to fall back, and, by uniting with the other troops under general Winder, which were supposed to be between us and Washington, enable the general to make a better disposition of his whole force; and so advised general Stansbury, who, in reply, observed, that the order was positive, that he must make his stand where he was; to which, of course, we submitted.

The two companies of artillery, and the riflemen under major Pinkney, were detached from me, and stationed near the bridge at Bladensburg. The 5th was formed under the directions of colonel Monroe, the present secretary of war, on the left, and in line with general Stansbury's brigade, from which period, my attention was principally confined to this regiment. The men beheld the gradually approaching dangers of battle with a firm

and undaunted countenance. The action commenced about one, by an attack on the redoubt, where the riflemen and artillery were placed. These soon retired, and the 5th covered their retreat, and kept up a lively fire, and supported their place in line with firmness, until the enemy had gained both flanks, and the order to retreat was given by general Winder himself. I was directed to take a road to the right, as we retired, leading to the city of Washington; but we were so annoyed by the enemy's flankers, followed by his whole force, and finding no reserve to support us, or upon which to form, it became impossible for me, though ably assisted by my field and other officers, to preserve order. On my arrival at Washington, I was informed that general Winder had passed through Georgetown, and taken the Fredericktown road. We followed and came up with him about three miles from Georgetown, and reported ourselves. By this time it was nearly dark. General Winder here informed me, that he should retire upon Montgomery court house. I obtained his permission to seek for refreshment and quarters, and discretionary orders to endeavor to turn the course of the retreat towards him. This night I had the mortification of witnessing the conflagration of the city of Washington, being only distant about four miles. Early the next morning, with my field officers, I crossed the country to the Baltimore road, with a view of turning the troops we might meet or overtake, towards Montgomery. We soon fell in with numbers of general Stansbury's brigade, and those who marched from Baltimore under my command. But our exertions were again ineffectual, from the knowledge all possessed of the destruction of the public buildings in the city, and that our baggage wagons had passed into Virginia. In fine, I concluded, that it would be im-

possible to collect any force short of this place, and so came on. Gen. Winder soon afterwards arrived here, and seemed satisfied with what I had done.

I ought to notice, that the first line, formed on the battle ground, was changed under the direction of colonel Monroe. On this occasion he observed to me, "Although you see that I am active, you will please to bear in mind, that this is not my plan," or words to this effect.

The fall of the capital must be ascribed chiefly to the insufficiency in point of numbers, and total inadequacy in point of discipline of the troops assembled for its defence. No general, however great his talents or exertions, with such means, against such a foe, could have saved it. The imposing front of the enemy was never disconcerted by the fire of the artillery or the riflemen; and the brigade of general Stansbury was seen to fly as soon as the action became serious. No second line or reserve appeared to advance or support us, and we were outflanked and defeated in as short a time as such an operation could well be performed.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOSEPH STERETT,

Lieut. col. 5th regt. M. M.

The hon. R. M. Johnson, in congress, Washington.

Colonel George Minor's statement.

In answer to the several interrogatories made by colonel R. Johnson, chairman of the committee of inquiry into the causes of the destruction of the public buildings in the city of Washington, as hereunto annexed, state as follows, viz:

On Friday the 19th of August last, was informed, (not officially,) of the collecting of the enemy's forces in our waters, namely, the Potomac and Patuxent. Immediately issued orders for the

regiment under my command to assemble at Wren's tavern on the Tuesday following, it being the nearest point of the county of Fairfax to the city, and on Sunday the 21st, received orders, through brigadier general Douglas, to repair with a detachment of ninety men that had been previously placed in detail, to march at a moment's warning, to the aid of general Hungerford, whose headquarters were either in the counties of Westmoreland, King George, or Northumberland; and to make one other requisition of one hundred and forty men, exclusive of officers, and order them to the aid of general Winder, city of Washington: and on Monday evening, the 22d, received a verbal message from the president, by Mr. John Graham, to hasten on the troops which had been ordered from my regiment, which will more fully appear by said Graham's letter to general Winder, to which I beg leave to refer the committee; and after informing Mr. Graham the purport of the orders I had received, we both concluded it would be proper for him to return to Washington, and have the orders first alluded to, countermanded, so as to justify me in marching with my whole force to the city; which consisted, as well as I can recollect, of six hundred infantry and about one hundred cavalry; and the said Graham returned to Wren's tavern on Tuesday evening, the 23d, with general Winder's orders, written on the same letter to which I have referred the committee. On the receipt of which, I took up my line of march immediately, and arrived at the capitol between sunset and dark, and immediately made my way to the president, and reported my arrival; when he referred me to general Armstrong, to whom I repaired, and informed him as to the strength of the troops, as well as to the want of arms, ammunition, &c. which made it as late as early candle-

light, when I was informed by that gentleman, the arms, &c. could not be had that night, and directed me to report myself next morning to colonel Carberry, who would furnish me with arms, &c. which gentleman, from early next morning, I diligently sought for, until a late hour of the forenoon, without being able to find him, and then went in search of general Winder, whom I found near the Eastern Branch; when he gave an order to the armorer for the munitions wanting, with orders to return to the capitol, there to wait further orders.

On my arrival at the armory, found that department in the care of a very young man, who dealt out the stores cautiously, which went greatly to consume time: as, for instance, when flints were once counted by my officers, who showed every disposition to expedite the furnishing the men, the young man had to count them over again, before they could be obtained, and at which place I met with colonel Carberry, who introduced himself to me, and apologized for not being found, when I was in search of him, stating he had left town the evening before, and had gone to his seat in the country. After getting the men equipped, I ordered them on to the capitol, and waited myself to sign the receipts for the munitions furnished; and on my arrival was informed by major Hunter, who commanded in my absence, orders had been given to march to Bladensburg, when we took up our march for that place, and met the retreating army on this side the turnpike gate, and was ordered by one of general Winder's aids, to form the line of battle on a height near that place, and was soon after ordered by the general in person to throw back my regiment from that position, into sections, and to wait until the retreating army had passed and cover their retreat; and immediately after sent his aid to direct me to coun-

termarch immediately, and come on to the capitol. After returning there, halted the troops, to wait further orders, until general Winder directed me to march them on, without telling me where; of course I marched with the other troops until I came to the six buildings, where I took the left hand road, leading to the foundery, and there occupied the nearest height to that place, and sent the adjutant to find where the general had made his rallying point, and was informed, at Tenly Town, where I marched that evening, and found the troops moving off to encamp at some convenient place on the river road, where I followed on until I saw two barns, where I made too, and rested for the night. Next morning sought for general Winder; met him on the road leading from Tenly Town to where my troops lay, when he ordered me to Montgomery court house, and from thence to Baltimore. Given under my hand, city of Washington, 30th October, 1814.

GEO. MINOR,

Col. com. 60th regt. V. M.

Lieutenant colonel John Tayloe's statement.

Franklin House, Washington, November 4, 1814.

SIR—In obedience to your request, as chairman of the committee of investigation, &c. I have the honor to make to you the following statement: on my return from the Northern Neck army, commanded by major general Parker, of the Virginia militia, which I left on the 20th August, with despatches from that officer, in reply to a communication I had been charged with, concerning the Virginia drafts; I arrived at Washington on Sunday night late, (the 21st,) and reported myself early the next morning to general Armstrong, who ordered me to meet him at the war office at 12 o'clock, from whom I received the following order:

“ War department, Aug. 22, 1814.—12 o'clock.

“ General order.—General Douglas will assemble his brigade at Alexandria, and hold it there, subject to orders.

J. ARMSTRONG.”

I immediately proceeded with all speed, and executed the above order. Having received general Douglas's communication, I hastened to Washington, and handed it to general Armstrong on Tuesday night, the 23d; when he instantly sent me back to Virginia, charged with the following orders, and with verbal directions to forward on the Virginia drafts *with all possible speed*.

“ War department, August 23, 1814.

“ General order.—Lieutenant colonel Minor will repair to Washington, with the regiment under his command, with the utmost despatch. He will report, on his arrival at Washington, to colonel Carberry, of the 36th regiment of U. S. infantry, and make a requisition for arms and ammunition.

J. ARMSTRONG.”

“ War department, August 23, 1814.

“ General order.—All militia now in, and marching to Alexandria, (besides that of colonel Minor,) will march immediately to Washington.

J. ARMSTRONG.”

“ These orders will be communicated by colonel Tayloe.”

For the purpose of executing these orders without loss of time, and after communicating, by a dragoon, with colonel Minor, I proceeded down the Northern Neck, to general Hungerford's brigade, then encamped at camp Seldon, near Potomac creek. On the 27th August, I moved from the brigade at Occoquan, on its march to Washington, and came on with a despatch from the general to colonel Monroe, which I delivered at 2 o'clock in the morning at Washington.

General Armstrong manifested much zeal, and earnest solicitation for the defence of Washington, and instructed me to use my best exertions in hastening the troops for the attainment of that desirable object.

I have thus made you acquainted with the orders I received from the late secretary of war, previous to the capture of Washington by the enemy, and stated to you, as concisely and accurately as I can recollect, at this distant period, the manner in which these orders were executed.

I am, very respectfully, &c.

JOHN TAYLOE,

Lieut. col. of cavalry, M. D. C.

Lieutenant colonel J. Laval's statement.

Washington city, October 31, 1814.

SIR—I have been honored with your letter of the 26th instant, in behalf of the committee appointed to inquire into the causes which gave success to the enemy in his late enterprise against this city, desiring to know the part taken by my command; my orders, positions, and duties; number of cavalry under my command; and the different corps of cavalry, &c. in answer to which, I have the honor to inform you as follows:

It is necessary, first, I should beg leave to commence my narrative from Carlisle, the place which had been assigned me by the secretary of war, to collect, equip, mount, and instruct, the dragoons, for whom that place was selected as a depot, and at which I received my orders for this city; this is the more necessary, as it is highly important to me to exhibit the true state in which I set off, and thus redress the erroneous opinion the public had formed of my command, both in point of strength and capacity as dragoons.

I took command early in March last, of the depo

at Carlisle, and as fast as the recruits arrived, they were instructed in the sword exercise, marched through the drilling movements, and received all other instructions that could be given them without horses, having none then. After a few months, one troop was completed, mounted, equipped, and trained, but it was ordered to Buffalo, under command of captain Hopkins, who carried with him all the horses, except the lame and sick. Thus I had to begin again, and wait for men arriving from the different rendezvous; and patiently wait also for horses, which came on slowly, until about the 25th of July, when I received the following orders from the war department, to which letter I must call your particular attention, it being an essential document to prove the state I was in, and the condition in which I left Carlisle to meet the enemy, as it happened in ten days:

“Adjutant and inspector general’s office,

Washington, July 20, 1814.

SIR—As soon as you have assembled the recruits for the light dragoons, arrange them into two troops, with the requisite number of officers, if within your command, and as soon as lieutenant Darrah has furnished you with a sufficient number of horses to mount them, you will, without delay, move to Montgomery court house, Maryland, taking the nearest and best road to that place, &c.

The equipment, complete, cannot probably be furnished in time at Carlisle, you will, in that case, order them to Baltimore.

On your arrival at Montgomery, you will report to brigadier general Winder for orders.

By order of the secretary of war.

(Signed)

JOHN R. BELL,

Assistant inspector general.

Lieu enant colonel Laval, of the light dragoons.”

The above orders were executed with the utmost activity and punctuality. I despatched, immediately, an express to the officer mentioned, as purchaser of the horses, (lieutenant Darrah,) who was then at Pittsburg, upwards of two hundred miles from Carlisle; I enclosed the tenor of my orders, in return of which, as soon as practicable, he sent what horses he had, being about twenty; and came himself some time after, with about the same number: and then, with all reasonable despatch, purchased what was wanted to mount what number of men fit for duty, I then had, being about one hundred and forty, arranged as directed. into two troops, the one commanded by captain Burd and two lieutenants, and the other by captain Littlejohn and two lieutenants. The purchase of horses was completed on Saturday, the 13th of August, and I marched off with the squadron on the Monday following, 15th. I arrived at Montgomery on Thursday, the 18th. On Friday, the 19th, I came to Washington for orders, and returned to Montgomery same day. And on Saturday, the 20th, about ten o'clock in the morning, I marched my troops through the city. I crossed, according to orders, the Eastern Branch Bridge, and encamped nearly opposite the navy yard. There we remained until Sunday afternoon, 21st, when we were ordered to the Wood Yard, between which place and Nottingham, and Marlboro', and the Old Fields, we were kept on constant duty, in reconnoitring, in patrolling, in escorting, furnishing videts, to and fro, until Tuesday, the 23d, when we recrossed the Eastern Branch Bridge, about eleven o'clock at night, both men and horses hungry and harassed with fatigue. We remained in that situation until about ten o'clock in the morning, Wednesday, 24th. A stack of hay had just been discovered and directed to be purchased, when I received the following order, to wit:

Headquarters, Washington, August 24.

Lieutenant colonel Laval will proceed immediately with his detachment to Bladensburg, and report to brigadier general Stansbury.

(Signed)

WM. WINDER,
Brigadier general, &c.

The men, extremely anxious to feed their horses, were in the act of fetching the hay on their heads, and it was with much difficulty they could be persuaded to drop it before they reached their horses. The trumpet sounded, the men ran to their horses, and in a few minutes I was under way for Bladensburg. A number of the horses were unable to proceed; several of the men sick; and from other casualties, my command was reduced to about one hundred and twenty-five. This, sir, was the total amount of the dragoons under my command. The report which has circulated, of my having, on that day, from four to five hundred dragoons, is erroneous. There were several other troops of volunteer cavalry, but, sir, I had no command nor control over them. What might have been their orders I know not; they did not join me, nor did I receive, at any time, any orders to take command of them, or any of them.

I have, in compliance with your request, sir, procured the names and probable strength of each troop, which, as near as I have been able to obtain, is herewith subjoined.

I proceeded to Bladensburg;—I had never been there before;—the enemy was in sight;—my orders were to report to general Stansbury;—I stopped my troops in the road near the river;—I looked for the general;—I could not come up with him;—he was visiting his troops. Our horses being much in want of water, we marched to the river. The enemy was then advancing rapidly towards it; I retired without having met the general, whom I had never seen. On my retiring from the river I was met by

colonel Monroe; (then secretary of state;) I informed him I was in want of orders, and being totally unacquainted with the place, I was indebted to him for the place he pointed out, which I occupied immediately with the squadron. At the moment of my entering the ravine, general Stansbury passed by and approved of it. I was then satisfied that the general knew my position: the action began immediately, and the front of the ravine being too high for me to observe the movements of the enemy, I advanced in front with one of my officers, lieutenant Brakin, to judge better of the opportunity which might offer. Our being elevated, and in a conspicuous situation, the balls and rockets soon showered around us. I had no other chance to form any idea, having never been at the place before. We were too late to form any judicious arrangements, not knowing how the troops and batteries were disposed in Bladensburg, and we arrived too much before our own troops from Washington to know the disposal of them in the rear.

The engagement was but short; I will not enter into the details of it, as you have, no doubt, sir, been furnished by a better authority; nor is it your desire. I will only state what leads to any reference to my share. All of a sudden our army seemed routed; a confused retreat appeared to be about, in every corner of the battle ground; and the place we were occupying seemed to have been the one by which it was to be effected. They poured in torrents by us; my right wing being outside of the ravine, covered, unfortunately, a gate which it appeared was much wanted. An artillery drove through before we could clear it; several of my men were crushed down, horses and all, and myself narrowly escaped having my thigh broken by one of the wheels, which nearly took me off my horse. All this created much confusion in the right wing of the squadron;

they, however, soon got in order, and the stream of the running phalanx considerably abated.

In the midst of a confusion, the like of which I had never seen in a field of battle, one of my troops was carried off the field, either through some mistaken or improper orders, as it was unknown to me, who ought to have been first directed or consulted; the moment that so important a point of discipline is trampled upon, a commanding officer loses all responsibility as well as credit, and risks his honor for the name of having a command.

Captain Burd's troop, which then did not consist of more than fifty five men, was all the command I was then left with, hardly half of a captain's command. Yet it has been wondered at why I did not cut to pieces four or five thousand of the British veteran troops, with fifty-five men, all recruits, and upon raw horses, the most of them had not yet been purchased two weeks; the consequences are so obvious that I did not think myself justifiable to make so certain, so inevitable a sacrifice, without a hope of doing any good: there is a distinction between madness and bravery.

Regular troops never act nor retreat without orders; I had no other orders than those I have stated above, I therefore remained as long as I could. I consulted with captain Burd before we left the field, who had no more desire to leave it than I had, but it was high time; when we saw all going, I could no longer doubt of the order being general; I could not account for its not being more generally communicated. The enemy was then advancing rapidly under a shower of fire, besides a column of about seven or eight hundred which had gained considerably on our right; we then, and only then, sir, marched off on a walk between the flanking column and our disordered army. We continued in that order, walking our horses as slow as horses could walk, when

we were again met by colonel Monroe, who walked his horse with us better than a mile, until he was satisfied that the enemy on our right required to be kept in observation. He left us and advised to proceed in the order we then were, and we did so.

The pleasing hope to meet all our forces collected at Washington, and that we would there be better able to receive the enemy, from various motives and resources which we could not have had at Bladensburg, filled my mind with anxiety, and helped to comfort me in our retreat; for it was not in the power of imagination to have indulged itself with a moment of doubt, whether we should fight or not at Washington, and defend the capital to the last man. I have not met a man who was not of the same opinion with me on that score; by what fatality we were made to pass through the city and leave it unprotected I know not, nor is it within the reach of my comprehension.

Having arrived at the capitol, I formed my troop. It had been rumoured, or ordered, (I do not remember which,) that we were all to form near it; but after remaining there half an hour, I saw no troops in the neighborhood. I was then informed that the president's house was the place before which the army was to be formed. I then marched through the avenue, and soon arrived before the president's house, but saw no army, nor symptoms of any, which would indicate a probability of resistance. After remaining in that situation for about three quarters of an hour, I could not, nor would not, believe that the city was to be given up without a fight. When I received orders to follow the army, which it appeared had passed through Georgetown two hours before us, I then, sir, with a heart full of sorrow, grief, and indignation, ordered my troop to follow the army, and met it about three or four miles above Georgetown. What follows the period, I

presume, sir, is of little importance to you and the committee of inquiry; I therefore will close by saying, that from that day to this I have not ceased to lament the event, without being able to penetrate into the cause.

I have now given you, sir, all the information in my power, relative to the several points, the subject of your request, in the letter you have honored me with in behalf of the committee, of whom

I have the honor to be, &c.

J. LAVAL,

Lt. col. com. squadron U. S. L. A.

The hon. R. M. Johnson.

Strength and names of the several mounted volunteer corps on the ground at Bladensburg.

Lieutenant colonel Tilghman, about	-	70
Major Ridgley,	- - - - -	110
Captain Graham,	- - - - -	35
Lieutenant Williams,	- - - - -	20
Captain Herber,	- - - - -	25
Total,		<u>260</u>

Colonel William D. Beall's statement.

Georgetown, November 22, 1814.

SIR—I have the honor to reply to your request, directed by the honorable committee “appointed to inquire into the causes of the success of the enemy, in his recent enterprises against this city, &c.” that, on my march to Bladensburg, on the 24th August, I received general Winder’s order, in reply to a letter I had written him the day before, to join general Stansbury at Bladensburg; that on my arrival at the mill, I was met by a gentleman (general Winder’s aid I supposed) who informed me my ground was Veitch’s Hill; he conducted me to the ground, where I formed and received the enemy, after he had done with the army below the hill. On our re-

treat, at the capitol hill I received an order to march through Georgetown to the heights above it, but we reached Tenly Town; and from thence, about twelve o'clock at night, were ordered to move on the river road, no point designated; the next day we arrived at Montgomery court house; the next day we encamped at Gaither's heights, thence to Ellicott's Mills, thence to the two mile stone towards Baltimore.

I have been informed by a gentleman who acted as one of general Winder's aids, that he brought me an order to retreat, but I do not remember it.

This is as short a statement as I can make, to comprehend the design of the committee.

I have the honor to be, &c,

WM. D. BEALL.

N. B. Having marched about sixteen miles that morning, before the battle, my men were fatigued and exhausted. Although it is not my impression that my command gave way as early as is represented by some, I must acknowledge that the contest with the enemy was not of a character corresponding with my wishes, in defending the capital of the United States; and therefore made every exertion to rally the men, and partially succeeded; but they ultimately gave way, in despite of exertions, like the other troops. My command consisted of about seven or eight hundred men.

Major William Pinkney's statement.

Baltimore, November 16, 1814.

SIR—I have the honor to make the following communication, in compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 17th of last month.

The detachment, of which my battalion of riflemen (or rather three companies of it) formed a

part, marched from Baltimore on the 21st of August, under the command of lieutenant colonel Sterett of the 5th regiment, and arrived at Bladensburg about sunset on the 23d, where it encamped below, and at a short distance from the brigade of general Stansbury, who had fixed his encampment on Loundes' Hill, by the side of the road from Marlboro', and between that road and the river road. The detachment was wholly from the third brigade of Maryland militia, and consisted of the 5th regiment, between four and five hundred strong; of two companies of artillery, (with six six pounders,) commanded by captains Myers and Magruder, amounting to about one hundred and fifty men; and of three companies of my battalion, commanded by captains Dyer, Aisquith, and Bader, amounting to about one hundred and eighty rank and file.

In the night of the 23d, (about eleven o'clock,) we were called to arms by several discharges of single muskets, in quick succession, by general Stansbury's picquets. Our detachment, of which only I had much opportunity to observe the conduct, turned out with alacrity, and exhibited during the alarm, great spirit and firmness. The dispositions made by general Stansbury to meet the enemy, who was supposed to be advancing by the upper road, appeared to be prompt and judicious. It was a false alarm, however, and, after a few hours, we were permitted to return to quarters.

We had scarcely reached our encampment, before colonel Sterett and myself were summoned to the tent of general Stansbury, where we found his principal officers assembled. The general stated to us, that he had just received intelligence from general Winder, that he had retired upon Washington, across the Eastern Branch; and he asked our advice as to the course, which, in consequence of that movement, it was proper for him to pursue, ap-

prising us at the same time, (as I think,) that general Winder expected him to fight the enemy, if he should take the route of Bladensburg. It appeared to be certain that the enemy *would* take that route without loss of time, and that general Stansbury's force, fatigued and exhausted as a portion of it was, consisting altogether of militia unused to service, amounting to little more than two thousand men, and deprived of all prospect of support from any quarter, was in no condition to withstand nearly thrice its number of regular troops, in a position which presented no peculiar facilities for defence; especially when it was considered, that general Winder's force, more numerous than general Stansbury's, consisting partly of regulars, high in character and discipline, furnished with more and heavier artillery, and with a powerful body of horse, had just been compelled to place the Eastern Branch between it and those troops. For these and other reasons, the officers present were of opinion, that general Stansbury ought immediately to break up his encampment, and, by drawing nearer to Washington, consult the safety of the force under his command, and put it in a situation to co-operate with that of general Winder, and to receive and execute the orders of that general, whatever they might be, for the protection of the capital: Gen. Stansbury was himself of that opinion; and in conformity with it, we retired across the bridge, in good order, to a high ground, on the edge of the main road, about a mile and a half from Bladensburg, from whence the enemy could be reconnoitred, if he should advance as had been anticipated. We halted at this place about sunrise on the 24th, after general Stansbury had (as he informed me) despatched his aide-de-camp (major Woodyear) to general Winder, to give him notice of his march, and take his orders upon it. While we remained here, general Stans-

bury mentioned, or showed to me, (I forget which,) a letter, just received by him from general Winder, written, I believe, before general Winder knew of his late march, from which it appeared that general Winder still calculated on his engaging the enemy, if he should attempt to approach by Bladensburg. I was still of opinion, and so expressed myself to general Stansbury, that, although it seemed to be his duty to prepare his troops to dispute, alone, and to the last extremity, the enemy's passage to the city, and it was possible the military views of his superiors might impose such an undertaking upon him, he ought not, unless his orders were peremptory, (and they were not yet understood to be so,) to seek the enemy at a distance from general Winder, without whose immediate aid he could not fail to sacrifice his men, already broken down by toil and fasting, and want of sleep, and thus to produce the destruction of the capital; that major Woodyear would soon return with precise orders from general Winder, founded upon a knowledge of his situation and the designs of the enemy; and that, even if major Woodyear's return should be unexpectedly retarded, and a removal from his actual position should become necessary, it would be far more prudent that general Stansbury should proceed to occupy one of the strong grounds yet nearer to Washington, with which the road abounded, where he might not only encounter the enemy with advantage, but readily be succored by the commander in chief, than that he should go back to his old encampment, or its neighborhood, while general Winder's co-operation continued to be precarious. I believe that colonel Sterett and colonel Ragan gave to general Stansbury the same opinion, in substance, and that general Stansbury concurred in it. He did not, however, move nearer to Washington; for major Woodyear shortly afterwards (about nine o'clock)

brought him verbal orders from general Winder, to retrace his steps, and contest with the enemy the pass of Bladensburg, together with an assurance that he would join him without delay. These orders were immediately obeyed; and between ten and eleven o'clock A. M. the troops were halted in a field, where there is an orchard, on the left of the road as you approach Bladensburg from Washington, not far from the bridge. The passage at Bladensburg may be effected, as I comprehend, by two routes: by the bridge and deep ford just above it, and by the more shallow ford in the old Baltimore road, a little above the fork made by the northeast and northwest branches; which ford is reached from Bladensburg by first crossing the northeast branch in the present Baltimore road, and then turning to the left; and we halted at the point from which a passage by either, or both of those routes, might best be opposed.

While the enemy was expected, a cloud of dust announced the advance of a body of troops upon the upper road; and they soon showed themselves upon Loundes's Hill, which they descended rapidly. As general Winder had not yet appeared, preparations were made to receive them by general Stansbury, assisted by colonel Monroe. At the bottom of the field, between four and five hundred yards from the bridge, as I conjecture, was a sort of battery, *en barbette*, which had been hastily constructed for heavy artillery, under the direction of colonel Wadsworth. The Baltimore companies had been employed, from their first arrival in the field, (with such tools as they could get,) in cutting embrasures through the parapet, which was much too lofty for their six pounders, and which there was not time to reduce through its whole extent, and in masking them with brush-wood. In this battery, they were now stationed. I was ordered to place my companies in ambush on its right,

with a view to afford protection to it, and to annoy the enemy in his approach, if he should succeed in crossing the bridge, or in fording the stream in its neighborhood. I conducted my battalion, accordingly, to the place prescribed, and there distributed them behind a fence and among the bushes, upon the slope of the bank which terminates the field, and also beyond the slope, as near to the bridge and ford as was practicable, taking my own station some yards in the rear, (with the adjutant and sergeant-major,) on the top of the bank in the field, where there was nothing to interrupt my view of an advancing enemy. The 5th regiment was posted about fifty yards in our rear, (outstretching us, of course,) and gave confidence to my companies and the artillery. Two companies of general Stansbury's brigade (acting as riflemen, but principally armed with muskets) were posted near the barn, behind the battery, at a small distance from us. The residue of that brigade was (I think) stationed to the left of the battery, near to and beyond the road which flanks it, called the Mill Road, to watch, as I suppose, that road and the upper ford, and to march, or to supply detachments, as occasion might require, to sustain the other parts of our force. A few horse paraded on the main road, sometimes as far as the bridge. Such appeared to be our means of resistance, and such the distribution of them. It was soon ascertained, however, that the troops, whom we had believed to be foes, were a regiment of Maryland militia, under the command of lieutenant colonel Beall; and my battalion was consequently withdrawn into the field, where it rested upon its arms. The newly arrived regiment passed on to the rear, and took post out of my view, and (as I have since heard) on the opposite side of the main road, where we had halted in the morning, as before stated. It is but justice to the men under my command, to ob-

serve, in this place, that they went to their posts with cheerfulness, although they were about to contend, as they supposed, with veteran troops, greatly superior in numbers.

Soon after the arrival of colonel Beall's regiment, the enemy was discovered in full march for Bladensburg, along the river road, and we once more prepared for battle. I had now from general Winder (who had recently come upon the field) the same orders I had before received for the employment of my men; with this difference only, that general Winder's orders imported, that it might be proper to place a portion of them upon the left of the battery, which it was undoubtedly of great importance to protect, and which the new order of battle, hereinafter, in part, explained, seemed to leave without protection, unless a detachment from my battalion should be so applied. In consequence, I detached captain Aisquith, with the whole of his company, with directions to take, and to maintain as long as possible, the most advantageous position there, for the objects indicated by general Winder's orders. I remanded the other two companies to their former stations among the bushes; and, after visiting the battery, and remaining there until the first and second shots were fired from it, I resumed my own station, (with the battalion officers before mentioned,) upon the top of the bank, in the field. A company of militia, under the command of captain Doughty, (having muskets only, but acting as riflemen,) placed itself, at my instance, on our right, near to the main road, under cover of some bushes and a fence. The 5th regiment, which had been moved from its first position, (where it might have contributed to repulse the enemy in his attempts to leave the vicinity of the bridge,) had now, to the great discouragement of my companies and of the artillery, been made to retire to a hill, several hundred yards

in our rear, but visible, nevertheless, to the enemy, where it could do little more than display its gallantry. The two companies of general Stansbury's brigade acting as riflemen, had changed their station, so that I no longer perceived them; but I have heard that they still continued at no great distance from their old ground, although concealed from me by the barn or by trees; my impression, however, is, that they did not, and could not, come into action there. The residue of general Stansbury's brigade had been moved from the left, and made to take ground (invisible to us, by reason of the intervening orchard) on the right of the 5th regiment, with its own right resting upon the main road and disclosed to the enemy. A small body of troops (but under whose command I am uninformed) were drawn up in advance of the left flank of the 5th regiment, and nearly at right angles with it; but, on account of the barn, I did not see it until the two companies of my battalion, which were stationed on the right of the battery, retreated, as will hereafter be mentioned. Of colonel Beall's very distant station I have already spoken from hearsay, but at the time of the action I knew only that it must be considerably in the rear. Of some artillery in the rear of our right I had no knowledge, until during the engagement I heard its fire, apparently well maintained.

I did not know that brigadier general Smith's brigade was in or near the field, until the action had ceased; nor was I aware that the artillery of commodore Barney, major Peter, captain Burch, and others, (which, if it had been brought up in time to act upon the bridge, and the road at each of its ends, could not well have failed to ensure a triumph over the enemy, especially if supported by a part of the infantry, of which no use was made, and if sufficient care had also been taken to observe the upper ford, to which, perhaps, the ene-

my might have had recourse, if beaten at the bridge,) was at any time near to us. In a word, I was ignorant of any reinforcements which either preceded, accompanied, or followed general Winder; except only, that I supposed that captain Doughty's company, and the few troops in advance of the left flank of the 5th regiment, (just before mentioned,) and a large body of horse, which was kept idle, had come from Washington.

The enemy having reached Bladensburg, descended the hill, about 12 o'clock, in a very fine style; and soon showed his intention to force his way by the bridge. Assisted by some discharges of rockets, (which were afterwards industriously continued,) he made an effort to throw across the bridge a strong body of infantry; but he was driven back at the very commencement of it, with evident loss, by the artillery in the battery, which principally acted upon the street or road near the bridge and he literally disappeared behind the houses. The effort was not immediately repeated; but the artillery continued its fire, with a view, as it seemed, to interrupt the discharge of rockets, as in some degree it did, and otherwise to check the enemy's operations.

After a long pause, during which I conjectured (erroneously, as I have since been told) that the enemy, less confident than before of the passage of the bridge, detached a corps of some strength to make its way by the ford, in the old Baltimore road, a second attempt was made to cross the bridge, with increased numbers and greater celerity of movement. This too was encountered by the artillery in the battery, but not with its former success, although it was served with great spirit, and commanded by officers of acknowledged skill and courage. In consequence, a large column of the enemy, which was every moment reinforced, either by the way of the bridge or by the ford immediately above it, was able

to form on the Washington side, and to menace the battery, and the inadequate force by which it was to be supported. While the enemy was yet at a distance, the company on our right (commanded by captain Doughty) discharged their pieces and fled, although he appeared to do all in his power to restrain them, as I myself did. My two companies were now (without other known aid than the other company on the left) to protect the artillery, and to receive the whole force of the enemy, which was rapidly accumulating. Following the example which had been set them by the company on their right, they too began to fire somewhat too soon; but in its progress their fire was manifestly destructive, and for a short time seemed to produce disorder and hesitation in the enemy's ranks. The enemy, however, soon pressed forward again, and was close at hand, when the artillery discontinued its fire. Its danger had become imminent, and it was apparent that it could do nothing more in its actual station to retard the enemy's progress. His advance, which threatened the right of my position and had almost reached it, was probably out of the line of any fire which the half formed embrasures of the battery would admit; and I should presume that it would have been difficult, if not impracticable, to depress the guns in those embrasures, (the ground of the battery being considerably elevated,) so as to touch the enemy after his near approach.

My companies were now in that situation that their right was on the point of being turned; and, as the battery was evidently about to be evacuated, and captain Aisquith's company was too weak to keep the enemy in check on the left, it followed that they were in that quarter exposed to the same peril. Our small force, moreover, (somewhat more than 100 men,) could not hope to make an effectual stand against the enemy, even if he should attack it only

in front, where there was very little in the shape of natural obstructions to break his column or impede his march. The line of our retreat, too, to the fifth regiment, (the nearest visible rallying point,) was of necessity across the open field in our rear; and only one of my companies had bayonets. Under these circumstances of urgent peril both the companies began at the same instant to move towards the artillery, now in the act of limbering its guns. The retreat of my men and of the artillery appeared to be simultaneous. The whole fell back upon the 5th regiment, (on the left flank of which great part of my two companies were halted and formed by captain Dyer, by the adjutant, and sergeant-major,) and the enemy succeeded instantly to their places. I followed in the rear of this retreat, narrowly escaping capture; and found my men in the situation above described, ready once more to act against the enemy. It is here my duty to say, that although the predicament in which my two companies were placed, when they moved from the right of the battery, was almost as desperate as it could be, I had given no orders to retire, and did not at that moment intend to do so. I cannot, and certainly do not, blame them for anticipating such orders, when they saw their desolate condition, and discovered that the artillery, with which they had been connected as a supporting force, could not continue its fire or hope to maintain its ground. My justification for withholding my orders to retreat, is, that I had none myself, and further, that having found that the enemy had neither artillery nor cavalry, I thought we might venture upon another fire, which could not be otherwise than deadly, now that the enemy was at a small distance from our muzzles. I have this other justification, (which I hope I shall be pardoned for mentioning,) that, as I was myself on foot, and had no horse near me, I incurred my full share

of the hazard of too long a delay. It is not improbable, however, that I was wrong, and that I owed it to these brave men to withdraw them, even at an earlier period, from a post where, beyond all question, if they had remained much longer, they must have been taken prisoners or cut to pieces; at any rate I take pride in bearing my testimony to their bravery and skill, of which I had many proofs during the severe trial to which they were exposed on that most disastrous occasion, amidst such privations, discouragements, and hardships, as might have subdued the spirit and beaten down the strength of veteran soldiers.

The 5th regiment had now to receive the enemy; and, with slight exceptions, it kept its ground with exemplary steadiness, and maintained a regular and spirited fire, until after it was ordered by general Winder to retreat, and after the necessity of retreat was perfectly obvious. My men adhered to its left, and did their duty there, and finally retired with it, the whole in considerable disorder. The troops of which I have spoken (in advance of its left) appeared to behave well, but were soon withdrawn or driven from their station, which the enemy could, indeed, reach with his shot without being seen by them.

Nothing could be more critical than the situation of the 5th regiment when it began to retire. Its right had been thrown open to the enemy by the precipitate retreat of the greater part, if not the whole, of general Stansbury's brigade. Its left had nothing to protect it; and, even if the enemy had sent no force by the ford, on the old Baltimore road, to gain its rear, that which he had pushed on by the mill road and the ground adjacent, was sufficiently formidable. Its front was singularly liable to be galled with impunity from the orchard, from the barn, and from other covers, within striking distance of

which it had been posted, while itself was not covered by any thing, and could hardly act upon any thing. I speak with the more confidence of the good behavior of this regiment, because I was constantly with my men while they acted with it, except only for two or three minutes, when I was employed in going to and returning from the mill road, immediately on their left, from whence I expected an attack. I was during all this time, too, on horseback, (having obtained a horse after we were driven from our first position,) and had thus the best opportunities of observation. During a part of this time I saw general Winder, zealously engaged in the discharge of his very anxious and arduous duties, and manifesting the courage which becomes a gentleman and a soldier.

Of the conduct of captain Aisquith's company I know no more than he and others have told me. I feel assured that it did well, and that the enemy felt the effect of the activity and resolution which distinguish it. My battalion sustained some small loss in wounded; and captain Bader was made prisoner.

A wound inflicted in the field from which the 5th regiment and my men retreated, as above stated, by a musket bullet, which struck my right arm in front, a little above the elbow, and passing through it, broke the bone, disabled me from further service, and made it necessary that I should not long delay to obtain surgical assistance. In this state I left the field, with (or a little after) the last of our friends, about five or six in number, among whom, I believe, was Mr. Meredith of the 5th. The enemy was then very close, and his fire was incessant but inaccurate. I have no further knowledge of the transactions to which your letter relates.

I have the honor to be, &c.

WM. PINKNEY.

The hon. R. M. Johnson, &c.

Captain Burch's statement.

City of Washington, October 12, 1814.

SIR—In answer to your request, I make the following statement:

On the 19th of August last, early in the day, I was ordered to call out my company for actual service, being at the time informed that the *whole body* of the militia were ordered into actual service, as it was ascertained that the enemy had landed near Benedict, and were about to proceed to this city. In the evening of that day the first brigade was paraded, and about one o'clock, P. M. on the 20th, we marched from the city in the direction of Benedict, and encamped for that night about three miles beyond the Eastern Branch, when general Winder took the command. On Sunday the 21st, we marched on and encamped that night at the Wood Yard, about fourteen miles from this place. On Monday morning it was understood in camp, that the enemy had, by rapid marches, got within a short distance of our encampment; upon which the commanding general detached major Peter, with his company of artillery, captain Davidson's infantry, and captain Stull's riflemen, as an advanced party, to reconnoitre and hold the enemy in check. They advanced some distance, and were soon after followed by the brigade, for two miles, when it was halted, and partially formed in order of battle. Major Peter met the enemy, who immediately filed off on the left and took the road to Upper Marlboro'. Major Peter having returned with his command, the whole of the troops were immediately marched back to the *Old Fields*, where we encamped that night. On Tuesday morning, the same party, under the command of major Peter, was again sent out to reconnoitre and skirmish with the enemy; and between four and five o'clock of that evening, we learned that they were

actually engaged with the British forces; the line of battle was then formed without delay, and we remained so until major Peter came up and took his position in the line. In a few minutes orders were carried through the line, for an immediate retreat to Washington, as it was said the enemy was too strong for us. I received orders to remain on the ground upon which we were formed, until all the troops had marched, and then every fifteen minutes to send off two of my pieces, with the proper number of men, until I had despatched all six of them; that if the enemy appeared in the mean time, (and his appearance was every moment expected,) to open my battery upon him, and continue to fire as long as I could do so in safety, and then retreat as fast as possible, and join the main body. Just as I had despatched the second division of my guns, the aid-de-camp of brigadier Smith, of the district militia, gave me orders to move off with the *whole* as fast as possible. As the main body had by this time got a considerable distance ahead, I was unable to get up with the rear until they arrived at the Eastern Branch Bridge, when my men were so greatly fatigued, that they could scarcely stand by their guns. After we had crossed the bridge into the city, and pitched our tents, between twelve and one o'clock at night, general Winder came to my tent and called me out: he observed, that he knew my men were worn down with fatigue and from the loss of rest, but that, in all probability, one of the last good acts which it might ever be in my power to do for my country, would be that night; he wished me to take thirty of my men, with three of my guns, and defend the passage of the lower Eastern Branch Bridge, as he had reason to believe that the enemy would attempt the passage of it that night. General Winder further observed, that he had some time before left directions at the navy yard, for a boat to

be sent to the bridge, with combustibles to blow it up, in case it became necessary, but that his orders had not been attended to, and that he should not go to rest until he had sent me the boat. I took my thirty men and three guns, and proceeded to the foot of the bridge, with orders to open upon the enemy, if he appeared, as soon as our rear guard had come over, and that if the enemy succeeded in getting upon the bridge, to set fire to the boat and blow it up, and then to resume my position and recommence my fire. A little before daybreak the boat arrived, and was placed under the arch next the draw. I kept this position without rest or refreshment, until ten o'clock on Wednesday morning, the 24th, when I was relieved by commodore Barney. I was then ordered to leave one of my pieces and fifteen men at the bridge, under the direction of colonel Wadsworth, and proceed on with the balance immediately to Bladensburg. I did so; and when I had arrived near the latter place, I was again ordered to leave two of my guns and a party of men in the main road, and push on with the remaining three and the residue of my men, and to report myself at Bladensburg, to general Winder. I proceeded until I arrived within a short distance of Bladensburg, when I found much difficulty in finding the general: I rode up and down the whole line in search of him, and when I returned I found that my guns had been moved off to the left; I followed on and overtook them just as they were formed in battery, near the extreme left of the line. I there discovered the general, and applied to him for directions; he replied, "captain, there is the enemy, (pointing to the British, who were then in plain view,) take charge of your pieces." I dismounted and took charge of my pieces, and in a few moments we opened our fire, which proved to be very gallant to the enemy, and after firing about fifteen

rounds, the 5th regiment of Baltimore advanced and commenced their fire. By the advance of this regiment one of my guns was masked, which rendered it useless; the other two continued the fire with much effect. The infantry who were posted on my right as a protection to my pieces, having given way, general Winder, *in person*, ordered me to limber and retreat. I did not do so immediately, but fired two or three rounds, when the general repeated his order in a *peremptory* manner. We retreated a few yards, when he observed to me, that he thought I might venture to unlimber one of my pieces and give them another fire. I was in the act of doing so, but as the enemy advanced so rapidly, he countermanded it, and again ordered me on. I saw no more of the general that day: the reason was, that after retreating a mile or two, I was so exhausted from fatigue, fasting, and heat, that I was unable to keep up with my guns, and fell behind them some yards. I fainted by the side of a fence unobserved by my men; after missing me, they supposed I had been taken prisoner. When I came to my recollection, I found myself ill of a fever, notwithstanding which, I procured a horse and found and joined my company on the route from Montgomery court house to Baltimore, and marched with them to Snell's Bridge, where we were halted, and afterwards countermarched to this place.

BENJ. BURCH,

Captain of the Washington artillery.

Captain Caldwell's statement.

The following is believed to be nearly a correct estimate of the cavalry on the ground, at the battle of Bladensburg, 24th August last:

Colonel Laval's United States' troops, about	120
A squadron of col. Tilghman's regt. M. M. about	75
Ditto. command of major Ridgely, ditto about	100
Captain Herbert's troop, ditto about	40
Captain Graham's troop, Virginia, about	40
Total,	<u>375</u>

The Alexandria troop, under captain Thornton, and the Georgetown troop, under lieutenant Williams, (both small,) accompanied colonel Monroe on the first day of the alarm, to reconnoitre the enemy, and had so many detached on different duties, as left but a few scattering ones on the field.

Part of the Washington troop were attached to general Winder, and had been generally detached in carrying expresses or conveying orders. The remainder were on videt duty. On the morning of the 24th, they were sent to patrol the road between the Eastern Branch Bridge and the enemy, and did not leave the rear of the enemy in time to cross the bridge and join the army, till the army was on the retreat, except three or four, who were employed in conveying orders, &c. or wherever they could be useful.

E. B. CALDWELL.

Statement of general Hungerford.

On the 23d of July was called on by the executive of Virginia to take command of the militia in the Northern Neck. After which general Madison was called into service, and major general Parker, to take the command of the two brigades under Hungerford and Madison. On the eighteenth of August, general Winder wrote to general Hungerford to march with expedition to the city, with the forces under his command. This letter was received on the 21st, at camp Nominy Hall, in the Northern

Neck, about 125 miles from Washington. His force consisted of three regiments, under colonels Boyd, Branham, and Parker. About fourteen hundred men, effectives, marched on towards the city; and colonels Downey and Chawning, who were in the counties of Northumberland and Lancaster, were directed to follow with their regiments.

A letter was received from colonel John Tayloe, on the 24th, dated the 23d, stating that the secretary of war required despatch, and directed the troops to march on by regiments, or even companies, if necessary. On Sunday, the 28th, was at Neabesco, about twenty-four miles from Alexandria; was waited upon by a committee from Alexandria, about two o'clock, who delivered a communication from the corporation of Alexandria, stating that the town had no artillery or military force to protect it, and they intended to surrender at discretion to the enemy; and that the town being under the control of the civil authority, it would be injurious to the town for any military forces to march to Alexandria. General Hungerford informed the committee that he should move on, and be governed by circumstances. He received a line on the same day from colonel Monroe, directing him to march, with all possible despatch, to Alexandria, and if the enemy had passed Alexandria to march on to the city.

On the morning of the 29th, about ten miles from Alexandria, another deputation waited on general Hungerford, with a printed order of the corporation, amounting to a request, that he should not proceed on to Alexandria, and interrupt the arrangement entered into with the enemy. To this communication general Hungerford replied, that he was acting under the orders of the government, and should execute those orders—and accordingly proceeded on his march. When within three miles of Alexandria, he was met by Walter Jones, esquire, who informed

him that the president and colonel Monroe desired him to station his forces in the rear of Alexandria; detach 500 men to the height just below Mason's Island, and send 150 or 200 to Aquia to co-operate against the enemy. A written order was received from colonel Monroe to the same effect that evening. General Hungerford arrived, with the three first mentioned regiments, in the rear of Alexandria, on the 29th, about five o'clock in the evening, where he remained till the 1st day of September. He was then ordered to the White House, with a part of his forces, to co-operate with the naval forces under commodore Porter.



No. 9.

Report from the navy department, including the official report of commodore Barney.

Navy department, October 3, 1814.

SIR—In compliance with your letter of the 26th instant, as chairman of the committee appointed by the honorable house of representatives, "to inquire into the causes of the success of the enemy in his enterprises against this metropolis, and the neighboring town of Alexandria; and into the manner in which the public buildings and property were destroyed, and the amount thereof;" and with your request "for such information on the subject, as may be in my power, and more particularly in relation to the destruction of the navy yard, and the amount of public property destroyed;" I have the honor to present the following report of the measures adopted by this department, and of the facts, within my knowledge, in relation to the objects of the inquiry:

In obedience to the general instructions and early solicitude of the president, in anticipation of the probable designs of the enemy to harass the country in

this vicinity, and to attempt the invasion of this metropolis, I directed, in the month of May last, three twelve pounders to be mounted on field carriages, by the mechanics of the navy yard, and completely equipped and furnished for field service. To these the marines at headquarters were trained under the command of captain Miller, and prepared to act either as artillerists or infantry, as the service might require. A short time previous to the reinforcement of the enemy in the Patuxent, I caused two long eighteen pounders to be mounted on field carriages, and prepared, in like manner, for field service, ready to be attached to the command of commodore Barney, should the enemy, at any time, compel him to abandon the flotilla under his command on the Patuxent, and the emergency call for the aid of his force in defence of the capital or of Baltimore.

For this eventual service that officer was instructed to prepare; and by his zeal and activity, his men acquired the expert use of their muskets, and a capacity, as well as an ardent disposition, to be useful to their country on either element.

On the 26th of July, in consequence of the menacing movements of the enemy near the Kettle Bottoms, in the Potomac, which it was said they were sounding and buoying off, the letter A was written; but, on account of information received on the same day, the letter B, countermanding the former, was written.

The enemy in the Patuxent was occupied in depredating upon its shores, until large reinforcements arrived at the mouth of that river on the 18th of August, the account of which was communicated on the 19th to the department, by commodore Barney, in the letter C, with a list of the naval force of the enemy annexed.

On the morning of the 19th information was received at the department from captain Gordon, com-

manding the United States' naval force at Norfolk, that on the morning of the 16th came in from sea, and proceeded up the bay, 22 sail of enemy's vessels, viz: two 74's, one 64, one razee, seven frigates, seven transports, and two or three brigs or schooners; which, it appears by the letter C, joined the force at the mouth of the Patuxent on the 18th; the whole of which ascended the Patuxent near to Benedict, on the 18th and 19th, and commenced debarking the troops. The letter marked D was immediately written to commodore Barney; the letter E to commodore Rodgers; and the letter F to captain Porter, urging the two latter to repair with their forces towards this city, with the utmost expedition.

Commodore Rodgers had previously made the most judicious arrangements to transport, with celerity, the marines and the principal part of the seamen, under his command on the Delaware station, to the head waters of the Chesapeake, or to Baltimore, upon any sudden emergency; and had organized and disciplined his men with a view to such service. It appears, however, by his letters G and H, that with every possible exertion, he did not reach Baltimore until the 25th, consequently too late to participate in the defence of the metropolis, against a force, the greater part of which came in from sea on the 16th, was first known to the department to have arrived on the 19th, marched from Benedict on the 20th, and entered the capital on the 24th.

Having sent to general Winder on the 19th a copy of letter C, on the 20th I called on him, at his quarters, at M'Keowin's, to show him the letter I, just received from commodore Barney, and my order to that officer to join and co-operate with the force under his command, (see letter K,) also, to point out those volunteer corps in his army, that comprised the mechanics of the navy yard, who, being excellent axemen, would act with great effect as pioneers.

As it was understood that a strong squadron of the enemy's ships, in co operation with his land force, had passed the principal obstacle in the Potomac, and was only retarded in its ascent by contrary winds, against which it was warping with great exertion. I expressed to him my solicitude for the defence of Fort Washington, and proposed to throw the marines, who had been trained to artillery exercise, and a part of the seamen, into that fort for its defence.

The general did not conceive the state of his force such as to warrant the abstraction of so efficient a part, as that of the marines and seamen, from the main body, which was to oppose the direct advance of the enemy's army on the city; and, indeed, his objection appeared to have weight. He did not, however, consider Fort Washington as tenable.

On the 21st the letter L was received from commodore Barney, and a detachment of about 110 marines, with three 12's and two 18 pounders, under the command of captain Miller, marched from headquarters to join commodore Barney, and reached the Wood Yard that evening.

In the course of this day and the following, I visited the navy yard, and inquired of the commandant what were the means of transportation, and what assistance he had in the yard? He stated that all the mechanics of the yard were, and had been, with the army from the first alarm; that no persons remained but the officers of the yard, three besides himself, and a very few of the ordinary, chiefly blacks; that two of the old gunboats were the only craft for transportation; that all the wagons in the district had been hired or impressed for the army; and that those blacks

who were usually to be had for hire, were employed on the works at Bladensburg.

I directed him to employ all the means he had, or could procure; to load the gunboats with provisions and powder, and send them up to the Little Falls; employ as many wagons as could be either hired or impressed, and convey as much of the navy powder as possible from the magazine, on the Eastern Branch, to Mr Dulany's barn, on the Virginia side of the Potomac, about nine miles above the city; to direct Messrs. Grayson, Stull, and Williams, to transport the public powder from their works to the same place; and to continue transporting the most valuable and portable articles from the yard to any place of safety, with all the means he could command.

The public vessels afloat at the navy yard, were the new sloop of war Argus, with her guns mounted, her topmasts launched, and her sails and detached equipments, complete, on shore, in store; the new schooner Lynx, and three new barges, one of the first, and two of the second class, completely equipped; with the two gunboats before mentioned.

On the slip was the new frigate Columbia, of the largest class, caulked, ready for coppering, and nearly so for launching. Her masts, spars, tops, &c. almost finished in the mast house; gun-carriages nearly completed; her sails made, and in the loft; her rigging fitted; blocks all made; and her equipments, generally, in great forwardness.

Besides the buildings, engines, fixtures, and shop-furniture of the several mechanical branches in the navy yard, there were about 100 tons of cordage, some canvass, a considerable quantity of saltpetre, copper, iron, lead, block tin, blocks, ship chandlery, naval and ordnance stores, implements, and fixed ammunition, with a variety of manufactured

articles in all the branches; 1743 barrels of beef and pork, 279 barrels of whiskey, and a moderate stock of plank and timber.

Had there been a prospect of transporting the sloop of war *Argus* to a place of safety, the representations of the commandant will show, that he had not the means of transporting her, and there appeared to be no situation in which she could be placed, in which she would not fall into the hands of enemy, in the event of his getting possession of the city. It therefore only remained to endeavor to save all the stores that could be transported, and the small vessels, particularly the barges, if practicable, by running them up to the Little Falls. This was directed to be done.

On the 22d, the letter M was received from commodore Barney. In the evening of that day, I accompanied the president to general Winder's camp, at the Old Fields, and passed the night in commodore Barney's tent; the army of the enemy at Upper Marlboro', eight miles distant. On the morning of the 23d, reviewed the seamen and marines, whose appearance and preparations for battle, promised all that could be expected from cool intrepidity, and a high state of discipline.

In the hope that commodore Rodgers might arrive that evening at Baltimore, and not doubting that the enemy would be retarded on his march, by obstacles and annoyance, until the seamen from Baltimore could reach Bladensburg, I wrote to commodore Rodgers the letter marked N, and sent it by a videt

About 2 o'clock P. M. I accompanied the president, on his return to the city, and, in the course of the evening, was informed of the sudden retreat of our army from the Old Fields to the city, over the Eastern Branch Bridge.

On the morning of the 24th, I proceeded to general Winder's quarters, at doctor Hunter's house, near the Eastern Branch Bridge, where the president, and the secretaries of war, state, and treasury, soon after arrived.

I found commodore Barney employed, by order of the general, in planting his battery on the hill, near the head of the bridge. He was charged to defend that pass, and to destroy the bridge, on the approach of the enemy; for which purpose, scows and boats, with combustible materials, were placed under the bridge, ready to explode. At this time the enemy was apparently advancing on the road to the bridge; but shortly after, advice was received, that he had turned off on the road towards Bladensburg, about six miles from that place. General Winder set off for Bladensburg, leaving commodore Barney, with his seamen and marines, in charge of the bridge.

It was soon observed that a very efficient part of the force had been left to destroy the Eastern Branch Bridge, which could as well be done by half a dozen men, as by five hundred. The subject was discussed by the president, heads of departments, and commodore Barney, which resulted in the order for his immediate and rapid march, to join the army near Bladensburg, which he reached just in time to form his men for battle. Captain Creighton was left in charge of the bridge, to destroy it on the near approach of the enemy.

I here presented, for consideration, the subject of the navy yard, to the view of the president and secretary of war, in the presence of the secretaries of state and of the treasury. I described the situation of the public vessels, and the nature of the public property, at that establishment; the vast importance of the supplies, and of the shipping, to the

enemy, particularly as there appeared to be no doubt of his squadron forming a junction with his army, should it succeed in the conquest of the capital; (general Winder having distinctly stated on the same morning, that Fort Washington could not be defended;) and as, in this event, nothing could be more clear than that he would first plunder, and then destroy the buildings and improvements; or if unable to carry off the plunder, and the shipping, he would destroy the whole. And if the junction should be formed, it would be a strong inducement to the enemy to remain, in order to launch the new frigate, which the force at his command would accomplish in four or five days. He would then carry off the whole of the public stores and shipping, and destroy the establishment; and, in the mean time, greatly extend the field of his plunder and devastation. Thus, in either case, whether the junction was formed, or whether the army alone entered the city, the loss or destruction of the whole of the public property at the navy yard was certain.

It was, therefore, distinctly agreed and determined, as the result of this consultation, that the public shipping, and naval and military stores, and provisions at the navy yard, should be destroyed, in the event of the enemy's obtaining possession of the city.

I went to the navy yard about 2 o'clock, and ordered the commandant to prepare the necessary trains, for the destruction of the public shipping, and of the naval and military stores, and provisions, in the navy yard, and to destroy the same, so soon as he should ascertain that the enemy had taken possession of the city; first removing such articles of most value as might be found practica-

ble, particularly the new barges, if possible, and then retire in his gig.

Subsequent events prove the justness of these conclusions, if, indeed, further evidence had been at all wanting.

The only *legitimate* objects of the enterprise of the enemy to this place, were the public shipping and the naval and military establishments; and none can believe that these would have escaped the torch of the destroyer of our civil edifices, of private ropewalks, and every thing in the most remote degree connected with navigation; but above all with the American navy.

The order for the destruction of the public shipping and property at the navy yard, was not issued without serious deliberation, and great pain, by him under whose auspices and direction those noble ships had been constructed, and a degree of activity, usefulness, and reputation, imparted to the establishment, which it had never known before. It was given under the strongest obligations of duty. It is conceived that no military maxim is better established, nor duty better understood, than that which enjoins the destruction of public ships, arsenals, naval and military stores, and provisions, when they can be no longer defended, or prevented from falling into the hands of the enemy; and that this duty becomes the more imperative, as the ratio of the value of the objects is enhanced to the enemy. To defend the shipping or navy yard was out of the question; all the mechanics and laborers of the yard, as well as all the seamen and marines in the district, were with the army.

The commandant of the navy yard is a captain in the navy; the vessels and property were under his charge and command; and if no special order from the department had been issued, and he had

suffered the public shipping and property to have fallen into the hands of the enemy, he would have committed a high military crime, for which he would have been amenable before a court martial. The objects which it was proper to destroy, in order to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy, could not be separated from those which might have been left for his destruction. They were in store, or in the midst of other combustible materials, and the fire from one would necessarily communicate to the other. Indeed the whole surface of the yard was covered with chips, timber, pitch, tar, and other combustible matter, that to set fire to any one object, must produce the successive conflagration of the whole.

On returning from the navy yard, towards the western part of the city, I learned that our army had retreated by the road to Tenly Town, and that of the enemy was rapidly advancing towards the city. I soon after received a message from the president, by Mr. Tench Ringgold, at Mr. Charles Carroll's, informing me, that he had proceeded to cross the river, and requested that I would follow and meet him on the other side.

I returned to the city on the morning of the 28th, immediately on hearing of the retreat of the enemy, and wrote the letter O to commodore Rodgers.

The paper P is a copy of the detailed report of the commandant of the navy yard, of the manner in which he carried into execution the order I had given.

The barge he states to have been saved, was sent to Alexandria, and, it appears, remained there until the enemy took possession of her.

One gunboat was sunk near Foxall's, laden with salted provisions, and has since been recover-

ed. The other was laden with provisions and gunpowder; but ran aground in the Eastern Branch, in attempting to transport her to the Little Falls, and was plundered by the inhabitants near the navy yard; the powder and part of the provisions have since been recovered.

The new schooner *Lynx* escaped the flames in an extraordinary manner, and remains entire.

The metallic articles have nearly all been saved, including a vast quantity of iron work, which, with little labor, will answer the original purpose.

The timber that was in the dock is saved; and a great deal of that which was partially consumed, will still be useful.

Almost the whole of the machinery of the steam engine is reported to be in good condition; the boiler is perfect.

The buildings, with the exception of the houses of the commandant and lieutenant of the yard, the guard-houses, and gateway, and one other building, have been destroyed. The walls of some appear to be entire, and but little injured; of others they are destroyed.

The monument was but slightly injured.

Paper Q is a list of the cannon remaining perfect in the yard, and of those which were injured by the enemy.

The issuing store of the yard, and its contents, which had escaped the original conflagration, were totally destroyed by the enemy.

Orders have been issued to the officers of the yard, to prepare their statements and estimates of the value of the public property destroyed, which shall be furnished as soon as possible.

With the circumstances attending the abandonment and destruction of Fort Washington, and the fate of Alexandria, I am no otherwise acquaint-

ed, than by the accounts which have been published.

After the capitulation of Alexandria to the enemy's squadron, a considerable force, in seamen, was ordered from Baltimore, (see letter R,) under the command of commodore Rodgers, with captains Porter, Perry, and Creighton. The former attacked and annoyed the enemy in his rear, in boats and with fire vessels, whilst the other commanders planted their batteries on White House Point and Indian Head.

Those measures precipitated the departure of the enemy, and greatly annoyed him in descending the river; but there was not time sufficient to prepare the means to render that annoyance effectual. All that the limited means employed could possibly effect, was accomplished, by the gallantry, skill, and patriotism of those distinguished officers, and the brave seamen, marines, and volunteers, under their command.

The measures pursued by this department, in order to co-operate in the defence of the metropolis, were not, in their nature, strictly sanctioned by the regulations and usages of the naval service, but were adopted with an ardent desire that they might prove effectual; with a certain knowledge that the zeal and patriotism of the naval corps would induce them to seek the enemy, with equal vigor and cheerfulness, in the field as on the main; and a conviction that the emergency fully justified any step which could contribute to the defence of the national capital.

Whether more or less has been done than duty required, is cheerfully and respectfully submitted.

I have honor to be, &c.

W. JONES.

The hon. Richard M. Johnson, chairman, &c.

Navy Yard, Washington, Oct. 18, 1814.

SIR—On a review of the consequences which emanated from the retreat of our army, and the entrance of that of the enemy into this city, on the 24th August last, so far as relates to this establishment, I respectfully submit the following general statement

After receiving repeated contradictory reports, relative to the strength and position of the enemy, during the afternoon and evening of that day, at twenty minutes past eight, P. M. I received incontestable proof (by captain Creighton and Mr. M. Booth, my clerk, both of whom had been voluntarily active to obtain me positive information) that the enemy was in complete possession of the city; having themselves been within the range of, and exposed to the fire of his musketry.

The boats for our conveyance from the yard, being stationed according to order, we immediately repaired down the yard, applying fire to the trains leading to the store houses, the principal of which were almost instantly in irresistible flame

Advancing towards the boats, those to the new frigate *Essex** and to the sloop of war *Argus*, were touched, and they also immediately enveloped in a sheet of inextinguishable fire.

From a momentary impulse, and *faint* hope of recovering the new schooner *Lynx*, I directed her not to be fired, and have the satisfaction to say, that, by an almost miraculous escape, she is still "ours."

The frigate *Essex*'s hull, in the shipwright's department, was very near complete, her bottom ready for coppering, and she could have been launched in ten days; her masts and spars were nearly

* The *Columbia*, as designated in my report of the third instant, but called the *Essex*, by the commandant, upon the presumption that her name was to have been changed

finished, with timber sufficient on the wharf to complete them; all her blocks, dead eyes, and the major part of her gun carriages, ready. Two suits of her heavy sails, and nearly the same quantity of her others, were finished in the sail loft, ready for bending, her standing rigging, &c. fitted in the rigging loft, and sufficient running rigging in store for her complete equipment; her largest boats nearly ready for launching, all her water casks and every material of cooper's work ready to go on board.

The sloop of war *Argus* lay at the wharf, with all her armament and equipment on board except her sails, which were in the sail loft, and her provisions in the stores, and therein consumed; and except her powder, which had not been shipped.

A large quantity of timber, plank, knees, &c. were in different parts of the yard, and the seventy-four gun ship timber, stored in the appropriate sheds, all fell a prey to the devouring element: also, one large and one smaller row galley, both armed, rigged, and prepared for service; and three heavy armed scows, with their guns, &c. on board, also ready.

The buildings destroyed by the fire from the frigate, &c. were, the mast shed and timber shed, the joiners' and boat builders' shops, and mould loft, all the offices, the medical store, the plumbers' and smiths' shops, and blockmakers' shop, the saw-mill and block-mill, with their whole apparatus, tools, and machinery; the building for the steam engines, and all the combustible parts of its machinery and materials; the rigging loft, the apartments for the master and the boatswain of the yard, with all their furniture; the gun-carriage makers' and painters' shops, with all the materials and tools therein at the time; also, the hulls of the

old frigates Boston, New York, and General Greene.

The storehouses first fired were, the provision stores, gunner's and ordnance store, cordage store, and sail loft; which, with all their perishable contents, were consumed.

The navy storekeeper's detail issuing store, containing in its different apartments, a large quantity of new canvass, twine, lines, bunting and colors; together with all our stores of mathematical instruments, and nautical apparatus, appertaining to navigation; ship chandlery, tools, nails, oils, paints, &c. had escaped through the night the effect of the fire, but was fired by the enemy on the succeeding morning, the 25th, and entirely consumed, with all its contents; as were also the coopers' shop, two small frame timber sheds, and that in which our tar, pitch, rosin, &c. were deposited.

The general loss of our papers prevents the possibility of forming a just estimate of the loss in the mechanical departments heretofore enumerated. Of that relative to the stores on hand, in the navy storekeeper's peculiar charge, it is presumed a tolerably accurate estimate may be formed, and will be the subject of a future communication, which shall be transmitted as soon as it is possible to effect.

On my return to the yard on the 26th, I had the mortification to observe, that the provisions which had been laded on board the old gunboat, No. 140, (and with which she had grounded, in endeavoring to get out of the branch, on the 24th,) had become a prey to numerous unauthorized persons, some of whom, however, instantly offered to deliver up all in their possession, which was subsequently done, but several barrels are yet to be accounted for.

A subject of still greater regret is, the loss of upwards of two hundred barrels of powder, which were wantonly and unauthorizedly taken out of the magazine, and chiefly thrown into the water; the cause of which, however, being under investigation by a court martial, on the corporal of the marine guard then there. I forbear to enlarge on the subject as my feelings would dictate.

I have the honor to be, &c.

THOS. TINGEY.

Honorable William Jones.

Navy Yard, Washington, Aug. 27, 1814.

SIR—After receiving your orders of 24th, directing the public shipping, stores, &c at this establishment, to be destroyed, in case of the success of the enemy over our army, no time was lost in making the necessary arrangements for firing the whole, and preparing boats for departing from the yard, as you had suggested.

About 4, P. M. I received a message by an officer, from the secretary of war, with information that he “could protect me no longer.” Soon after this, I was informed that the conflagration of the Eastern Branch Bridge had commenced; and, in a few minutes, the explosion announced the blowing up of that part near the “draw,” as had been arranged in the morning.

It had been promulgated, as much as in my power, among the inhabitants of the vicinity, the intended fate of the yard, in order that they might take every possible precaution for the safety of themselves, families, and property.

Immediately, several individuals came, in succession, endeavoring to prevail on me to deviate from my instructions, which they were invariably

informed was unavailing, unless they could bring me your instructions in writing, countermanding those previously given. A deputation also of the most respectable women came on the same errand, when I found myself painfully necessitated to inform them, that any farther importunities would cause the matches to be instantly applied to the trains, with assurance, however, that if left at peace, I would delay the execution of the orders as long as I could feel the least shadow of justification. Captain Creighton's arrival at the yard, with the men who had been with him at the bridge, (probably about five o'clock,) would have justified me in instant operation; but he also was strenuous in the desire to obviate the intended destruction, and volunteered to ride out and gain me positive information as to the position of the enemy, under the hope that our army might have rallied and repulsed them. I was myself, indeed, desirous of delay, for the reason that the wind was then blowing fresh from the S. S. W. which would most probably have caused the destruction of all the private property north and east of the yard, in its neighborhood. I was of opinion, also, that the close of the evening would bring with it a calm, in which happily we were not disappointed. Other gentlemen, well mounted, volunteered, as captain Creighton had done, to go out and bring me positive intelligence of the enemy's situation, if possible to obtain it.

The evening came, and I waited with much anxiety the return of captain C. having almost continual information that the enemy were in the neighborhood of the marine barracks—at the capitol hill—and that their "advance" was near Georgetown. I therefore determined to wait only until half past eight o'clock, to commence the

execution of my orders, becoming apprehensive that captain C had, from his long stay, fallen into the hands of the enemy. During this delay, I ordered a few marines, and other persons who were then near me, to go off in one of the small galleys, which was done, and the boat is saved. Colonel Wharton had been furnished with a light boat, with which he left the yard, probably between seven and eight o'clock. At twenty minutes past eight captain Creighton returned; he was still extremely averse to the destruction of the property, but having informed him that your orders to me were imperative, the proper disposition of the boats being made, the matches were applied, and in a few moments the whole was in a state of ir-retrievable conflagration.

When about leaving the wharf I observed the fire had also commenced at the works at Green-leaf's Point, and in the way out of the branch, we observed the capitol on fire. It had been my intention not to leave the vicinity of the yard with my boat during the night; but having captain Creighton and other gentlemen with me, she was too much encumbered and overladen to render that determination proper. We therefore proceeded to Alexandria, in the vicinity of which I rested till the morning of the 25th, when, having also refreshed the gig's crew, we left Alexandria at half past seven o'clock, and proceeded again up to the yard, where I landed, unmolested, about a quarter before nine.

The schooner *Lynx* had laid along side the burning wharf, still unhurt; hoping, therefore, to save her, we hauled her to the quarter of the hulk of the *New York*, which had also escaped the ravages of the flames. The detail issuing store of the navy storekeeper, had remained safe from the

fire during the night, which the enemy, (being in force in the yard.) about 8 o'clock, set fire to, and it was speedily consumed.

It appeared that they had left the yard about half an hour when we arrived. I found my dwelling house, and that of lieutenant Haradan, untouched by fire; but some of the people of the neighborhood had commenced plundering them; therefore, hastily collecting a few persons known to me, I got some of my most valuable materials moved to neighbors' houses, out of the yard, who tendered me their offers to receive them, the enemy's officer having declared private property sacred. Could I have stayed another hour, I had probably saved all my furniture and stores; but being advised by some friends, that I was not safe, they believing that the admiral was by that time, or would very speedily be, informed of my being in the yard, he having expressed an anxious desire to make me captive, but had said that the officers' dwellings in the yard should not be destroyed.

I therefore again embarked in the gig, taking along out of the branch one of the new launches, which lay safe, although alongside of a floating stage enveloped in flames. I had no sooner gone, than such a scene of devastation and plunder took place in the houses, (by the people of the neighborhood,) as is disgraceful to relate; not a moveable article, from the cellars to the garrets, has been left us, and even some of the fixtures, and the locks of the doors, have been shamefully pilaged. Some of the perpetrators, however, have been made known to me.

From the number and movements of the enemy, it would have appeared rash temerity to have attempted returning again that day, though my

inclination strongly urged it; therefore, reconnoitring their motions, as well as could be effected at a convenient distance in the gig, until evening, I again proceeded to Alexandria for the night.

Yesterday morning, the 26th, it was impossible to form (from the various and contradictory reports at Alexandria) any sort of probable conjecture, either of the proceedings and situation of our army, or that of the enemy.

Determining, therefore, to have a positive knowledge of some part thereof, from ocular demonstration, I again embarked in the gig, proceeding with due caution to the yard, where I learned with chagrin the devastation and pillage before mentioned, and found also, to my surprise, that the old gunboat, which had been loaded with provisions, and had grounded, in endeavoring to get out of the branch, on the evening of the 24th, was nearly discharged of her cargo, by a number of our people, without connexion with each other.

Having landed in the yard, I soon ascertained that the enemy had left the city, excepting only a sergeant's guard, for the security of the sick and wounded. Finding it impracticable to stop the scene of plunder that had commenced, I determined instantly on repossessing the yard, with all the force at my command; repairing, therefore, immediately to Alexandria, lieutenant Haradan, the ordinary men, and the few marines there, were ordered directly up, following myself, and got full possession again at evening.

I am now collecting the scattered purloined provisions, ready for your orders. presuming they will now become very scarce indeed; the quantity saved, you shall be informed, when known to me.

The Lynx is safe, except her foremast being carried away in the storm of the 25th, about 4

P. M. We have also another of the gunboats, with about 100 barrels of powder, and one of the large yard cutters, nearly full with the filled cylinders, for our different guns previously mounted, the powder of those, however, is probably much wetted by the storm. I would most willingly have an interview with you, but deem it improper to leave my station without some justifiable cause, or in pursuance of your instructions, under which I am ready to proceed, wherever my services may be thought useful.

I have the honor to be, &c.

THOS. TINGEY.

Honorable W. Jones.

P S Sunday morning, 28th. After terminating the foregoing last evening, I had scarcely laid down my pen, when a smart cannonading commenced at or from Fort Washington, which continued from heavy cannon, until after 7 o'clock, during which it appeared as if two or three severe explosions had taken place. No doubt that it was between the enemy's frigates and the fort; but as to the result. I am entirely without information, nor have I at command the means of obtaining it, the wind blowing too fresh up the river, for a light boat to make any progress down. I shall hire sufficient hands as soon as practicable, and collect all the materials unhurt by the fire, which shall be suitably deposited and protected.

T. T.

Farm at Elk Ridge, Aug. 29, 1814.

Hon. William Jones,

SIR—This is the first moment I have had it in my power to make a report of the proceedings of the forces under my command, since I had the honor of seeing you at the camp at the "Old

fields." On the afternoon of that day, we were informed that the enemy was advancing upon us. The army was put under arms, and our positions taken; my forces on the right, flanked by the two battalions of the 36th and 38th, where we remained some hours; the enemy did not make his appearance. A little before sunset, *general Winder* came to me, and recommended that the *heavy* artillery should be withdrawn, with the exception of one 12 pounder to cover the retreat. We took up our line of march, and in the night entered Washington, by the Eastern Branch Bridge. I marched my men, &c. to the marine barracks, and took up quarters for the night, myself sleeping at commodore Tingley's, in the navy yard. About 2 o'clock *general Winder* came to my quarters, and we made some arrangements for the morning. In the morning I received a note from general Winder, and waited upon him; he requested me to take command, and place my artillery to defend the passage of the bridge on the Eastern Branch, as the enemy was approaching the city in that direction. I immediately put my guns in position, leaving the marines and the rest of my men at the barracks, to wait further orders. I was in this situation when I had the honor to meet you, with the president and heads of departments, when it was determined I should draw off my guns and men, and proceed towards Bladensburg, which was immediately put into execution; on our way, I was informed the enemy was within a mile of Bladensburg;—we hurried on. The day was hot, and my men very much crippled from the severe marches we had experienced the days before, many of them being without shoes, which I had replaced that morning. I preceded the men, and when I arrived at the *line* which separates the district from

Maryland, the battle began. I sent an officer back to hurry on my men; they came up in a *trot*; we took our position on the rising ground, put the pieces in battery, posted the *marines*, under *captain Miller*, and the flotillamen, who were to act as infantry, under their own officers, on my right to support the pieces, and waited the approach of the enemy. During this period the engagement continued, and the enemy advancing, our own army retreating before them, apparently in much disorder. At length the enemy made his appearance on the main road, in force, and in front of my battery, and on seeing us, made a halt. I reserved our fire. In a few minutes the enemy again advanced, when I ordered an 18 pounder to be fired, which completely cleared the road; shortly after, a second and a third attempt was made by the enemy to come forward, but all were destroyed. They then crossed over into an open field, and attempted to flank our right; he was there met by three 12 pounders, the *marines* under *captain Miller*, and my men, acting as infantry, and again was totally cut up. By this time not a vestige of the American army remained, except a body of five or six hundred, posted on a height on my right, from whom I expected much support, from their fine situation.

The enemy from this period, never appeared in force in *front* of us; they pushed forward their *sharp shooters*; one of which shot my horse under me, who fell dead between two of my guns. The enemy, who had been kept in check by our fire for nearly half an hour, now began to outflank us on the right: our guns were turned that way; he pushed up the hill, about two or three hundred, towards the corps of Americans stationed as above described, who, to my great mortification, made

no resistance, giving a fire or two and retired. In this situation we had the whole army of the enemy to contend with. Our ammunition was expended; and, unfortunately, the drivers of my ammunition wagons had gone off in the general panic. At this time I received a severe wound in my thigh; captain *Miller* was wounded; sailingmaster *Warner* killed; acting sailingmaster *Martin* killed; and sailingmaster *Martin* wounded; but to the honor of my officers and men, as fast as their companions and messmates fell at the guns, they were instantly replaced from the infantry.

Finding the enemy now completely in our rear, and no means of defence, I gave orders to my officers and men to retire. Three of my officers assisted me to get off a short distance, but the great loss of blood occasioned such a weakness, that I was compelled to lie down. I requested my officers to leave me, which they obstinately refused; but upon being *ordered* they obeyed, one only remained. In a short time I observed a British soldier, and had him called, and directed him to seek an officer; in a few minutes an officer came, and, on learning who I was, brought *general Ross* and *admiral Cockburn* to me. Those officers behaved to me with the most marked attention, respect, and politeness, had a surgeon brought, and my wound dressed immediately. After a few minutes' conversation, the general informed me (after paying me a handsome compliment) that I was *paroled*, and at liberty to proceed to Washington or Bladensburg; as also Mr. *Huffington*, who had remained with me, offering me every assistance in his power, giving orders for a litter to be brought, in which I was carried to Bladensburg; captain *Wainwright*, first captain to *admiral Cochrane*, remained with me, and behaved to me as if I was a

brother. During the stay of the enemy at Bladensburg, I received every marked attention possible from the officers of the navy and army.

My wound is deep, but I flatter myself not dangerous; the ball is not yet extracted. I fondly hope a few weeks will restore me to health, and that an exchange will take place, that I may resume my command, or any other that you and the president may think proper to honor me with.

Yours respectfully,

JOSHUA BARNEY.

No. 10.

Letters from general Van Ness, doctor Catlett, and John Law, esquire.

General Van Ness' statement.

Washington, November 23, 1814.

SIR—To your request to me to “report to the committee appointed to inquire into the causes which led to the success of the enemy against this city, &c. such information, facts, and views, as are in my power,” I would have answered sooner, making such report, but for a very severe and protracted nervous attack, and a consequent considerable accumulation of indispensable private business. In the narrative which I have now the honor to transmit you, I shall, from the very nature of the case, be drawn into an egotism, which, I trust, the committee will be good enough to excuse.

In the campaign of 1813, we had a call from the war department, produced by the approach of the enemy in the Potomac, for a part of the militia of the district of Columbia, which was promptly attended to, on our part: but, owing to the great want of preparation by the government, in respect

to arms, ammunition, camp equipage, provisions, and the consequent delays and confusion, the troops would have been inadequate to an efficient resistance, until after they had been out some days: that fact and those circumstances were then evident to all. The incompetency of Fort Washington, on the east bank of the river, a few miles below Alexandria, and the necessity of its improvements, were then seen and freely spoken of by secretary Armstrong. Indeed, the importance and necessity of erecting a new fortification or battery, at some one of the several favorable sites on the river, so as completely to shut out from the upper part of it, or repel, a hostile fleet, was strongly and repeatedly suggested and admitted by the secretary. He frequently told me then and afterwards, substantially, that he had "such a project, and was about to execute it: that he was only balancing between several different points, which had been proposed or presented to his view, and he believed he must go down himself to reconnoitre and select." After the lapse of some time, not seeing or hearing of any step towards the execution of this project. I several times reminded him of it, and he, as often, still encouraged me by words to expect it, whilst he, generally otherwise appeared rather indifferent, and expressed an opinion, that the enemy would not come, or even seriously attempt to come, to this district.

About the opening of the present campaign, I pressed again upon the secretary the subject generally of our defence; suggesting, in addition to the occlusion of the river, the convenience and importance of a central camp, intermediate between Baltimore, Annapolis, Washington, Alexandria, Georgetown, and the neighboring towns and country. And in frequent interviews, (in number, to

be sure, very much increased by the importunate applications and solicitations to me, of both the civil and the military branches of the community, whose confidence in the secretary appeared at an early period, at best, wavering, if not declining,) sometimes official, at other times not so, which I had with him, as the campaign progressed, I did not fail to repeat the suggestion. I still received assurances, generally verbally, favorable, accompanied by an otherwise apparent indifference, and confidence in our security. In April last, col. Clinch, with about one hundred men, (I believe recruits,) arrived in this city; where he, with those troops, together with a few hundred who had been garrisoned through the winter at Greenleaf's Point, remained encamped for a few weeks. This was the only force of a regular character, excepting a small marine corps attached to the navy yard, which I recollect had been at all stationary in the place; and even the greater part of that was here only at a season when there was no actual danger, or even apprehension of it, and the whole was presently sent to the northern frontiers.

Sometime in June last, the enemy appearing in or about the mouth of the Patuxent, the secretary of war called on me for a detachment of militia. Several companies of light troops were immediately, in conformity with his instructions, ordered and marched to that river. After a short period of service, and the departure of the enemy, they were discharged.

Thus had the campaign progressed, without any visible steps towards works of defence, either permanent or temporary, either on the land or the water side, (I never having heard of a spade or an axe being struck in any such operation,) or to-

wards forming a rendezvous or camp of regular troops in the neighborhood, to the great anxiety, inquietude, and alarm, of the district and surrounding country; the secretary generally treating with indifference at least, if not with levity, the idea of an attack by the enemy.

When the conclusion of European hostilities, and the rumors and accounts of expeditions fitting out for this country by England, excited apprehensions more general and more serious than before, I again renewed the subject of our defence, and it was still treated by him as before. I had occasionally, though seldom, introduced it personally to the president himself, who, without going much into particulars, referred me, generally, on that subject, to the war department, on which he seemed fully to rely for the proper arrangements. In my anxiety and solicitude, I also occasionally mentioned this business to secretary Monroe, who always appeared to take a warm interest in it, and gave me strong assurances that he would do "every thing that he could with propriety do." At length, nothing visible having yet been done, and the danger being supposed constantly to increase, about the latter end of June, or beginning of July last, I inquired of secretary Monroe, whether it was the intention of government to abandon and sacrifice the district or not, adding, that if it were so, it would be well for us, at least, to know it. He answered me, that so far from that, every inch of ground about it was determined to be contested; and the last drop of blood to be spilt in its defence. He said it was decided, (I then understood, or inferred, that there had been a recent cabinet consultation on the subject,) to form a camp of regular troops, say between two and three thousand, at a central position, such as I have before spoken

of; who, together with the local troops, would constitute an adequate defence for the surrounding points, to either of which they might be promptly and conveniently drawn. When I saw secretary Armstrong again, soon afterwards, I expressed my satisfaction at what I had thus understood. He confirmed the information, and added, that there would also be drawn from Carlisle, about 200 cavalry, commanded by colonel Laval. In answer to my inquiry, when we might expect them, he said the troops were ordered on, and would begin to assemble in a few days' time, and that orders had been given to procure horses for those of the cavalry corps who were not yet mounted. This period, however, elapsed without the arrival of any of them. There appeared not to be taken into the calculation, a small detachment, or fragment or two, of a regiment or two of the regular army, who were in some part of the neighboring country, and who, at best, were supposed to be very inefficient. I afterwards, several times, reminded secretary Armstrong of our disappointment, considering the strong assurances given us, &c.; and I suggested the utility and propriety of ordering out our militia in successive or alternate detachments. I further informed him, (which I was authorized to do, by the pressing, voluntary offers of many of my fellow citizens,) that both the citizens and troops of the District of Columbia, were ready and anxious to be made use of, in any way that the government might prescribe or direct, for the public good. He continued to tell me, that the troops would soon be on. To my inquiries about the cavalry, more than once, he replied, that he had sent orders for purchasing horses to mount the corps, and that it would soon be here. Colonel Laval did not, how-

ever, arrive here until a day or two after the enemy had landed at Benedict.*

Sometime in July last, the secretary of war told me that general Winder (who was in the neighborhood of the Patuxent) had informed him that the enemy were ascending that river in force, and that he (general Winder) required, that as many of the militia of the District of Columbia as could be procured, should be immediately sent to him; and the secretary directed me to order out three companies to satisfy this call, which was immediately done. After having been in service nine days they were discharged.

A few weeks before the incursion of the enemy here, a project was originated among the banks, generally, of the district, to offer the government a loan for its defence. The secretary was informed of it in its progress, and appeared to approve it, observing, that the arrangement must be made with the treasury department. Although, owing to the necessity of some formalities at the offices, and the tedious delays in collecting the general sentiment of the different banks as to certain arrangements and terms among themselves, this project was not matured until about a week before the capture of the city, the secretary of war was before informed that the money would certainly be raised. This was done without any intimation or suggestion from any branch of the government, of the want of means for an adequate defence; although I recollect the secretary of war

* Colonel Laval has since informed me, that no effectual means were taken to mount his men, notwithstanding his frequent applications to the war department for that purpose; and that, learning that the enemy was actually approaching us, he, on his own responsibility, adopted means for procuring horses, on the spur of the occasion, or he could not have been on at all for the particular service.

had, sometime before, in a conversation I introduced relative to the purchase of some more ground about Fort Washington, for an extension of the works, observed, substantially, that the proprietor asked too much for it, considering how poor the government was, and that if we found it was really wanted in any pressing emergency, it would, of course, be taken and used.

At length, in August last, when the increased and reinforced fleet, with the troops, ascended the Chesapeake, and were known, from authentic information, to have entered the Patuxent, I called on secretary Armstrong again, and expressed, as usual, my apprehensions, arising from want of means and preparations; adding, that from the known naval and reputed land force of the enemy, he probably meant to strike a serious blow. His reply was, "oh yes! by G—d, they would not come with such a fleet without meaning to strike somewhere, but they certainly will not come here—what the D—l will they do here," &c. After remarking that I differed very much from him, as to the probable interest they felt in destroying or capturing our seat of government, and that I believed a visit to this place would, for several reasons, be a favorite object with them. He observed, "no, no! Baltimore is the place, sir, that is of so much more consequence."

The public confidence in the secretary of war had, for some time, been evidently rapidly declining, and the frequent and unreserved expressions by individuals to that effect, sometimes temperate, and sometimes otherwise, were really disagreeable and troublesome to me. The president must, I presume, have been aware of the fact, of this want or decline of confidence, as well from the ordinary sources of information, as from that which I have

understood (from one of the members themselves) he received from a joint committee or deputation of the municipal authorities of the city and Georgetown, who had, sometime before, a formal interview with him, relative to the general state of the district.

On the 18th of August last, I furnished secretary Monroe, at his request, and by instructions of secretary Armstrong, with two small troops of horse, to accompany him to the Patuxent. On the same day general Winder (after a conference with me, in which he was hesitating and undecided as to the force he might want from the District of Columbia, and in which I advised him, unequivocally, to call for all its militia) required my whole division of troops. They were accordingly immediately ordered out. Beginning to suspect, from circumstances, that some difficulty might arise between general W. and myself, on the score of command, and not meaning to create any not absolutely necessary, I determined not to raise the point until it should become *certain* that my troops were to go into *actual operation*. It soon became so by the near and direct approach of the enemy to the city. I then called on general W. and after observing to him, that all my troops being in service I considered myself so also; (as I was a part of, or inseparably connected with, the division,) I informed him that I should, of course, expect to take the command the law had assigned to me, of the whole, which I was prepared to do. He replied, that I would certainly be entitled to the command if I were *really in service*; and that he would, in such case, yield it to me cheerfully and without hesitation; but he said he did not consider me necessarily in service because *the two brigades* (which composed the whole) of my division had

been required and were in the field; and, inasmuch as this military district had been committed to him, he was compelled to retain the command until he should be regularly notified by the government, that an officer of superior rank was *actually in service* within the district. General W. in a conversation of some minutes between us, made a distinction (which I could not comprehend) between calling or having *the two brigades* of my division in service, and calling or having *the division itself*, which consisted wholly of those two brigades. In support of this claim, to the command of my division, he instanced the case of general Smith, of Baltimore, who, although a considerable part of his troops were in requisition and service, had not claimed the command, although he said he had, at first, made some intimation to that effect. I observed, that general Smith's conduct might be explained by the circumstance of his whole division not being in service. I concluded my interview with general Winder, by informing him, that I would immediately apply to the secretary of war to determine the principal fact on which the case rested—whether I was or was not in service; and thus to decide the question between us, in which he appeared cordially to concur. Had there been as little confidence *then* in that gentleman's generalship as there is *now*, my course would have been different. I accordingly instantly called on the secretary of war, who expressly declared it was "an embarrassing case," and, after some minutes' general and indecisive conversation on the subject, concluded by assuring me, that he would immediately state it to the president for his decision, and would, without delay, advise me of the result. This was early in the morning of (I think) Saturday, immediately preceding the Wednesday of the affair of Bladensburg.

After leaving secretary Armstrong, dissatisfied as I was with the general tenor of his language and conduct, relative to the business, during the interview, I also called on the president, stating to him, substantially, the case, and adding, as I had before done to both the other gentlemen, that if it were the particular wish and determination of the executive (which I began to think not improbable) that general W. should have the principal command in meeting the column of the enemy marching directly on the city from the Patuxent, that probably some separate station or command might be assigned me, as there were said to be other menaces and approaches. The president declined a decision until after the secretary of war should have been consulted. I returned to my house, where I waited impatiently with my aids, majors Brent and M'Kenny, who were ready and anxious to accompany me to camp, until half after 12 o'clock; and although, upon reflecting on what had passed between the secretary, general W. and myself, I was suspicious that it was predetermined, and arranged or understood between them, that I was not to have the command, or, at least, that an attempt should be made to withhold it from me, still, not hearing from the secretary, I sent a messenger to him requesting a decision. After detaining the servant about two hours, he sent me, by him, a written communication, giving me to understand that I was not considered in command or service. I determined not to attempt to create any discordance or schism at a moment of imminent peril, and when the cordial co-operation of all was so important; and, at the same time, whilst I held my commission of major general, not being able to serve under general W. I instantly sent my resignation to the secre-

tary, taking an early opportunity of assuring general W. that although I felt the injury done me, there was nothing personal in my motive; and, further, offering and pledging myself to him for any service in my power, either civil or military, which the public exigencies might require.* I continued to see general W. occasionally, as before, and to be astonished at the apparent sluggishness or procrastination in the preparation for the reception of the enemy, who was on his advance. I recollect well, that even after he had, according to authentic and undoubted information, ascended to the head of the ship navigation of the Patuxent, and had, for about twenty-four hours, been debarking on the hither bank of that river, and marching his troops to their encampment on the heights of Benedict, (about 40 miles from this, on the usual rout,) general W. in answer to an inquiry of mine, whether he had ordered on any troops from Baltimore, and whether he thought they would be here in time, said, that they were ordered on, and that all his fear was, that they would be here *too soon*. Expressing to him my astonishment at the apprehension, he said, he thought it very probable that the enemy would suddenly turn about and make a blow at Baltimore. Having been surprised for several days at not having seen, or heard of any actual attempt or movement towards throwing up works of any description in this vicinity, from behind which the enemy might be resisted with great advantage and effect, I proposed, at a meeting of our citizens, on the Saturday evening (after I had resigned) next preceding the day of the affair of Bladensburg, that a committee should be appointed to wait on

* Annexed are copies of my resignation; a subsequent letter from the war department, and my answer thereto.

general W. and suggest to him the importance of some such works at Bladensburg, through which village the enemy would certainly pass; and in case the general should approve the proposition, to request him to assign an engineer or officer to prescribe or superintend the work, the citizens furnishing the laborers, &c. gratis. A committee accordingly waited on him: he approved the idea; assigned or procured col. Wadsworth, of the ordnance department, to locate, superintend, &c.—and according to that officer's project and directions, (after having reconnoitered nearly a day, an operation in which, at his request, I accompanied him,) were the works completed by the citizens, although, to the universal astonishment, not a man occupied, during the action, the principal one; and most advantageous parts of the ground, also, which had been reconnoitered, (and where the enemy might have been cut up and slain by hundreds,) were not even occupied by our troops! Owing to accident and misinformation, I was not in the commencement of the action; but the whole scene, during my advance towards the right front, where commodore Barney with his men, and the marine corps, did themselves so much honor, whilst I continued there, and afterwards in retiring from one point to another as far as Georgetown, contained disgusting and inglorious circumstances. How what was called the first line of our troops, or their left, generally, was formed, I do not know. In that part of the field on which I moved, and afterwards, during the retreat, I could discover or learn nothing like a system or an order of battle, of retreat, or of rallying, or reforming; and several of the officers of the militia of the city and Georgetown, (general W. Smith's brigade,) whom I met with in the course

of the affair, (and who, with their men, were generally in good order, and deeply regretted the want of opportunity to act efficiently,) appeared, in this respect, to be in the same predicament with myself.

A cardinal error in this whole business was, in my opinion, that the great body or mass of the Baltimore force,* was not ordered on this way so soon as the direction of the enemy's movement was ascertained, with instructions, whilst they (the Baltimore force) were advancing, always to keep themselves between Baltimore and the enemy, so that they might and would have been ready, as the two branches of our army and the enemy approached each other, always to co-operate, either before or after a junction, with the troops assembling here, (who would, of course, have followed the enemy had he wheeled towards Baltimore,) in case of an attempt either on this place or Baltimore; and thus, an overwhelming and operative force would have been collected. Another very great error, I think, was, that the enemy were suffered, undisturbedly, to encamp on the heights of Benedict, where the local circumstances are well calculated for resistance, and to advance from there to Bladensburg without having been harassed or annoyed in their progress; this was probably, in part, and perhaps principally, owing to the want of a central camp, and, generally, of means and preparations on our part, when the enemy landed.

Another error was, that our men were, for a short period before the action, unnecessarily harassed and worn down by fatiguing and ill-timed marches; which, in addition to the fatigue many of them underwent from running, as it were, from their homes

* A part only of the Baltimore force came this way.

(from which they were hurried and dragged at the moment, instead of having been ordered out in proper season) to this city, almost exhausted them. Another, a want of attention and promptness in having the reinforcements, as they arrived in the city, supplied with arms, ammunition, provisions, &c. and in accustoming them to the familiar use of the former. Another, that the enemy were suffered to advance too far, even at Bladensburg, before they were met; owing, doubtless, to the absence of our troops, who had been encamped the preceding night within about three or four miles only of the field of battle. Another, a want of the most advantageous order or arrangement in the battle itself; one of the causes of which, doubtless, was, that the enemy were suffered really to anticipate us in the occupation of the ground intended for ourselves. Another, the evident want of a concerted plan of retreat to, or rallying at, some one or more of the advantageous positions between the battle ground and the capitol. Another, a premature order (as generally understood) of retreat. Another, that a respectable body of apparently excellent troops, (the Fairfax regiment of militia,) who had been in the city since a late period of the preceding day, were not in the action. I understand, from a gentleman who was present, that early in the evening of the preceding day, after the arrival of those troops in the city, their commander made application to the secretary of war for arms and ammunition for them; and that, owing to objections made by the secretary, he did not obtain them until the morning, which probably was a principal cause of his detention from the engagement. Another error, I think, was, that general Young's brigade of Alexandria, which was encamped on the east side of Potomac, opposite to

Alexandria, within a few miles of the Eastern Branch Bridge, was not sent for immediately, (if not before,) when it was ascertained that the enemy was rapidly approaching Bladensburg: if this had been done, general Young might either have marched towards that place by the road south of the Eastern Branch, where he might have distracted and annoyed the enemy in flank or rear, or he might, (crossing the Eastern Branch Bridge,) if he could not have reached the field of battle, have met our retreating troops at some point in the city, and might thus have been very instrumental in restoring the fortune of the day; and in either case, he might, in a few hours' time, have returned to his former station: whereas he remained, in obedience to an order (as he has himself informed me) that day given by the secretary of war, at his position, not an enemy near him, or in sight, whilst his men distinctly heard the affair at Bladensburg, and were mortified at their absence from it. Another error was, that the woods, fences, ravines, &c. by the sides of the turnpike road, were not lined with our light troops to annoy the enemy in his advance from the battle ground. At all events, on the rising ground southwest of the turnpike gate, if not before, our troops ought to have made another stand. By the extraordinary exertions of private gentlemen, as well as officers, and by the opportune arrival at this favorable spot, of the Fairfax troops, (I think about 600,) who had not yet been engaged, a body of about ten or twelve hundred men was already formed, including several pieces of artillery, well planted, and their number was rapidly increasing, by the rallying of fugitives, the arrival of fresh troops, &c.; and I am confident that had they remained there, (in a position as well covering the navy yard as the city generally,) the

British would not have advanced that night; they being at least two or three miles off, wearied, and, partially, severely handled: and by the morning, such advantages of system, arrangement, rest, increase of numbers, confidence, &c. might have been improved by us, as would have led to the discomfiture and defeat of the enemy; but, unfortunately, even from here those troops were ordered to retreat towards the capitol square, and thence to a more distant place; against both of which movements I took the liberty, at the time, of remonstrating to general Winder. Another unfortunate error was, that our troops, after it was determined to abandon the city itself, were not halted on some of the commanding heights around it, from which they might constantly have operated with effect, either by detachment or otherwise, on the enemy during his continuance here; and from which, if it had become necessary to retire, we might, at all times, have retired with safety. Another error was, that a considerable and unnecessary number of wagons and carts were in the field or its immediate vicinity, from which, at an early period of the engagement, they fled, and in their flight contributed much to the dismay and confusion of the day. Another error was, that the enemy was not pursued and annoyed in his precipitate departure to his ships. Many of those errors, doubtless, arose from the want of correct information relative to the enemy; which, in itself, was an extraordinary circumstance, as, for some days before they (the enemy) entered the city, there were several hundred cavalry among our troops. Many of the evils of the day also unquestionably arose from the rawness of a considerable part of our militia force; indeed, considering what the description of the great mass of our troops was, and that they had

to contend with about an equal number of veterans, nothing but judicious and skilful management, added to our decided superiority of artillery and cavalry, the native valor of our men, fighting for all they held dear, and the local advantages within our reach, could have authorized the expectation of success.

Although I cannot think the means we had on the spot were used to the best advantage, still, I think general Winder was by no means furnished with sufficient or timely means; which I always considered it the special duty of the war department to have attended to.

From a certain degree of delicacy, sir, in my situation, as regards both the late secretary of war and general Winder, it is not without some reluctance that I have given the committee the above view; but considering your call as imperative, and having always been of opinion, that it was due to the American people that the facts and circumstances connected with the fall of the capital should be fully developed, I transmit it to you, after having necessarily prepared it in great haste. Possibly other circumstances relative to the subject may hereafter occur to me: should that be the case, I will take the liberty of communicating them. I presume, also, that I shall have the privilege of hereafter correcting any errors, either in form or substance, that may have crept into the statement.

JOHN P. VAN NESS.

Hon. R. M. Johnson, &c.

City of Washington, August 20, 1814.

SIR—Give me leave hereby to resign the command which I have for some time past had the honor to hold, as major general of the militia of the District of Columbia. My commission would

have been enclosed had I been able to lay my hands upon it. A principal regret which I feel upon this occasion, is, that my resignation occurs at a moment when I would have been happy to have been permitted to participate in the defence of my country, and particularly of the district.

I have the honor to be, &c

JOHN P. VAN NESS.

Honorable John Armstrong, secretary of war.

War department, November 12, 1814.

SIR—I am instructed to state that your resignation of the command of the militia of this district, as major general, has not been accepted, and that it would be satisfactory to the president that you should resume it.

That you were not called into service with the troops of the district, did not proceed from a want of respect for your merit, which is acknowledged, but from the impossibility of doing it, at the time, without displeasing the commander of the district, from which the most serious injury was apprehended, the enemy having just landed at Benedict, and being on his march for this city. Great confidence is entertained in your patriotism, zeal in support of the cause of your country, and fitness for the trust, regarding your comparative experience with that of others of our fellow citizens, in active service. I add, with pleasure, that your conduct, after presenting your resignation, and particularly at Bladensburg, after joining our troops as a volunteer on the preceding day, has increased these favorable impressions.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JAMES MONROE.

Major general John P. Van Ness, city of Washington.

Washington, November 14, 1814.

SIR—On my return to the city, after a few days' absence, I had the honor of receiving your communication of the 12th instant, advising me that my resignation of the command of the militia of this district, offered some time since, has not been accepted, and that it would be satisfactory to the president that I should resume it.

Injured as I felt by the treatment I received, in relation to my military command, I adopted, as a proper expression of that feeling, what I considered the only course which, whilst it was just to myself, was not inconsistent with the public service, a course which I am gratified that my friends, both public and private, have universally approved. At the same time, sir, without, at present, hazarding an opinion, or going into any argument as to the sufficiency of the reason for disregarding my claim to the command, or to service, on the approach of the enemy to the metropolis, permit me to state, that I am perfectly satisfied that the president was actuated solely by a regard for the public good.

For the general politeness of your letter; for acknowledging the correctness of my conduct subsequent to my resignation, and particularly in the unfortunate affair at Bladensburg, although I have due sensibility, and fully appreciate the honor done me by the intimation of the president's wishes, it is out of my power to comply with them upon this occasion; which, I presume, cannot be regretted, inasmuch as other gentlemen, better qualified for the purpose, must be within the view of the government.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN P. VAN NESS.

To the hon. James Monroe, esq. secretary of war.

Doctor Catlett's statement.

SIR—In compliance with your request, I will endeavor to make as concise and correct a statement of the circumstances which came within my view, of the late campaign in this neighborhood, as is in my power.

On the evening of the 21st, (being attached to the suit of general Winder, as staff surgeon,) we were met by colonel Monroe at the Wood Yard, who had left Nottingham about sunset, where he saw the advance of the enemy with their barges and small vessels. Next morning colonel Monroe, general Winder, and suit, proceeded down and met them, within three or four miles of Nottingham. After taking such positions as would afford the best view of the enemy, and remaining under cover of the woods until they advanced within three or four hundred yards of us, those gentlemen retired, with colonel Laval's troop, which was also in advance, until we met an advanced detachment of our troops, about four or five hundred, which were immediately ordered to retreat to the main body, at the Wood Yard. Major Hite had been ordered to remain near the forks of the road, to observe whether the enemy took that leading to Marlboro' or the other we were on, to the Wood Yard. The country here, from the heights and fields, was admirably calculated to afford observations of the enemy. Their entire want of cavalry was observable, from there being none with their advance, to which we had been so near. Videts were placed in our rear. General Winder proceeded towards the Wood Yard: colonel Monroe took a direction across the country towards Marlboro'; I accompanied him. We soon (about 12 o'clock) began to hear the explosion and see the smoke from the flotilla. We were over-

taken by some of the videts, who stated, that there were fifteen or twenty horsemen on our left, supposed to be of the enemy, attempting to cut us off. We immediately shaped our course towards the Wood Yard; met general Winder, who returned; passed a number of our troops; and arriving at the Wood Yard, found the main body moving off towards the Long Old Fields, where the army encamped in the evening. Next morning, 23d, the president and all the heads of departments were in camp, having (I understood) came down that night. The president reviewed the troops, supposed about 3,500, having been joined at the Wood Yard by commodore Barney's men and other corps at this place. About 2,500 Baltimore troops were at Bladensburg. This day an advanced detachment, I believe under the command of major Peter, met the advance of the enemy in the neighborhood of Marlboro'; some firing took place, and our troops retreated. General Winder was some miles over to the left, observing on the direct road from Marlboro' to Bladensburg. Towards evening we returned to the Old Fields, and found our army advantageously posted to receive the enemy. A retreat was soon after ordered to this city, leaving some flour and whiskey destroyed on the camping ground. This night I slept within a mile of the field, and at daylight sent a man over in that direction to learn whether the enemy were there. He reported in the negative, and I went directly into the road and came on to the city, before eight o'clock, believing that the enemy could not reach Bladensburg until late in the day. The upper bridge was on fire, and the other prepared to be blown up as I crossed it. The first news I heard on entering the city, was, that the enemy were within two and a half miles, coming towards the

bridge, and there appeared to be a continual succession and industrious circulation of false reports and false alarms. The enemy were pertinaciously represented to be at least nine thousand, and many were disposed to believe their number greater, although several prisoners taken yesterday, could only enumerate four regiments, and name but one general, and one colonel, acting as brigadier. I examined several myself, with all the address I could, and would certainly have risked my life upon their almost entire want of artillery and their want of cavalry. There appeared to be an impression with our troops, generally, that the enemy were much more formidable than appearances could justify. About 11 o'clock the main body of our troops moved off from near the Eastern Branch Bridge towards Bladensburg, and by a necessarily extraordinary effort, for men immediately from ship board, the British reached the opposite side of the village nearly at the same time with our troops, about 1 o'clock. They halted in front about twenty minutes, until their rear got up. Some officers were seen observing us from the opposite heights. The two armies were about three-fourths of a mile apart, pretty much in view of each other. The position of our troops will be better described to you by others. A few minutes before the action commenced, by request of general Winder, I delivered an order to major Pinkney, in front, to take the most judicious position with his riflemen to protect the artillery at the battery, within two hundred yards of the Bladensburg Bridge, and three or four hundred in advance of our first line. The enemy were now coming down a street in the village, in thick column. This battery, of about seven pieces, commenced a destructive fire upon them, which immediately threw their

advance out of the street, among the houses, but they were very soon crossing the bridge in great numbers, notwithstanding an additional *cross* fire from several pieces from our right. They advanced with great steadiness towards the battery. The artillery retreated; the rifles received them handsomely, but soon retreated also. They began by firing a few rockets about the time that our fire commenced, which passed a considerable distance over our first line, immediately in the rear of which were the president and several other gentlemen of the cabinet. It was suggested to them, I think, by general Winder, to take a more respectful distance, and they did so. General Winder rode along the line, encouraging the men to disregard the rockets. The enemy having carried the battery in front of us, began to flank irregularly, but a considerable number also, advancing directly upon this line, (through an orchard) which soon commenced a fire upon them, from an elevated position, and too soon after, before they came within point blank shot, retreated. They were, however, a number of them, easily rallied by another officer and myself; but on part of the line giving way, which had stood fast, farther on the left, they all broke off again. The fire now became very hot in the centre, from our musketry and artillery: the musketry too distant, although with great advantage of position, but the artillery evidently with great execution. The musketry continually and successively (without being rallied) retreating as the enemy advanced upon them; and as soon as they closed up with commodore Barney's command, a general retreat took place, before they had reached a considerable portion of our infantry. Being in the rear, I observed that the enemy seemed to halt when the

firing ceased, about a mile and a half on this side of Bladensburg; there was nothing like pursuit. When I got to capitol hill, there were no troops formed there. As I passed through the city, it was reported that the enemy were coming in from towards the race ground. I observed that it was false, and only intended to produce panic. The few citizens I saw at their houses appeared as if resigned to meet an awful fate. The main body of our army were now retreating through Georgetown, where I met a deputation, the mayor and several others, going out to meet the enemy. They can best tell, but I do not think it probable that the enemy were advancing or knew the extent of our retreat before this deputation met them, for I had seen them halting; and the next day, when I came in with a flag, to attend our wounded, I learned from some of their officers, that they suspected our troops were still on the heights above Georgetown, though they were at Montgomery court house, from which place general Winder had ordered me back to Bladensburg, with permission of the British commander, for the purpose mentioned. I met the advance of the British army on capitol hill, supposed to be about 700, and passed their main body, supposed about 2,000, on the hill this side the turnpike. They appeared to be preparing to move; had about forty miserable looking horses haltered up, ten or twelve carts and wagons, one ox cart, one coachee, and several gigs, which the officers were industriously assisting to tackle up, and which were immediately sent on to Bladensburg, to move off their wounded. A drove of sixty or seventy cattle preceded this cavalcade. On our arrival at Bladensburg, the surgeons were ordered to select all the wounded who could walk, those with broken arms and the like, and send them off imme-

diately. The forty horses were mounted with such as could ride, the carts and wagons loaded, and ninety odd wounded left behind. I estimated their wounded at three or four hundred, besides forty or fifty left in this city. One of the British surgeons informed me, they had buried that day about one hundred on the field: and the men who were sent out next day after the retreat of the enemy, to bury three or four Americans, reported that they also buried fifty or sixty red coats, or British. I found at Bladensburg commodore Barney, captain Miller, of marines, and seventeen other Americans, badly wounded. I estimate our whole loss at ten or twelve killed on the field, and thirty odd wounded; though others, who had less opportunity of judging, estimate it at more than double. About midnight (being up all night) I heard the sound of a bugle, and was informed that the whole British army were passing through the lower end of the village. In the morning, early, I saw them still going off in small squads, and some stragglers were moving off till noon, about which time we learned that their main body were halted about eight miles on the road to Marlboro'. About sunset captain Burd came down from Montgomery court house, and informed commodore Barney and myself, that our troops were marching on to Baltimore, and about the same time we were informed, by several persons, that the British were within a few miles of Marlboro'. The commodore expressed a wish that general Winder could be immediately informed of the certainty and manner of their retreat; and, not being able to find any one else, to be depended on, to go for one hundred dollars, having engaged doctors Martin and McCulloch to attend to our wounded until my return, with the advice of commodore

Barney, I set out, about dark, with one dragoon, and reached our camp, beyond Snell's Bridge, 28 miles, about one o'clock. The troops were intended about this hour to march on to Baltimore. General Winder was gone on; generals Smith, Stansbury, and others, held a council on my information, and it was determined to send off (I think) the principal part of the cavalry in pursuit of the enemy immediately. The troops to remain until daylight, and the militia of the District Columbia to return to the district. I have never been able to learn what cavalry were actually sent off, or the success of their enterprises. After this I was, and have ever since been, confined to the attendance of a hospital, and can relate little further from my own observation.

I have the honor to be, &c.

HANSON CATLETT,

Surgeon 1st regiment infantry.

Respecting the condition of the enemy's troops, I was informed by several of the British officers, that just previous to their reaching Bladensburg, (with excessive fatigue or entire exhaustion,) they were dropping off in considerable numbers; that in the action, it was only by the most extraordinary exertions that the main body could be goaded on. Although I observed some of their flankers at times advance on the run a small distance, these were said to be only the most active of their light companies of, and attached to, their 85th regiment, commanded by lieutenant colonel Thornton, acting as brigadier; they appeared to me to halt, as if exhausted with fatigue, at or near the place where the firing ceased on our part, about a mile and a half on this side of Bladens-

burg, about two o'clock P. M. Their advance, however, reached the capitol about dark or eight o'clock; the main body I am informed never came further than the height on this side the turnpike. You ask further for information as to their numbers. Although I had a better opportunity of observation after the battle, than any other of our officers, I cannot pretend to state with any degree of confidence on this subject; but my estimate was, on capitol square 700; turnpike hill 2000; wounded at Bladensburg 300; attendants and guard 300; wounded and attendants in the city 60; and from information, killed at Bladensburg and city 180—total 3540. However incorrect these estimates may be in the detail, they are corroborated in the aggregate, by the best information I could get from the surgeons, sergeants, and men left in hospital.

Respectfully,

H. CATLETT.

Mr. John Law's statement.

Washington, November 10, 1814.

SIR—In compliance with your request, I beg leave to submit to you the following statement of the movements and operations of the troops to whom I was attached, from the period of their march against the enemy who had landed at Benedict, until their return on the 27th of August.

On Friday the 19th August, the militia of this county were mustered near Mr. Ringgold's ropewalk, and on being dismissed, were ordered to equip and hold themselves in readiness to march the next morning. The 2d regiment, under colonel Brent, accordingly assembled near the capitol, and by nine o'clock A. M. were prepared to take

up the line of march. About one o'clock, the first regiment under colonel Magruder, arrived at the capitol hill. Shortly after the whole force collected from this county, commenced its march; and after proceeding about five miles from the Eastern Branch Bridge, encamped that night on the road to Upper Marlboro'. The next morning the troops were again mustered, and the articles of war read to them. About twelve o'clock, the detachment of marines under the command of captain Miller, passed our encampment with five pieces of artillery, and shortly after our two regiments of militia again took up the line of march, and after advancing about seven miles, encamped on a field belonging to the Wood Yard estate. We here joined the regulars of the 36th and 38th regiments. The main body of the enemy stayed that night at or near Nottingham; having an advance party stationed at a church about three miles this side of that town. About one o'clock the same night, our troops were beat up and ordered to strike their tents; although the principal part of the force did not move until nine or ten o'clock the next morning. About sunrise the regulars, together with a small detachment of about three hundred men, consisting of captain Peter's company of artillery, captain Stull's rifle corps, and captain Davidson's light infantry, were sent in advance on the road to Nottingham. About nine or ten o'clock the same day, the remainder of our force marched about a mile, to an elevated position near the dwelling house of Mrs. West, and remained there about two hours, under the expectation that the enemy would take that road on his way from Nottingham to Washington. It was, however, ascertained that the enemy had taken the road to Upper Marlboro', and that the detach-

ment of our troops who had been sent that morning in advance, were retreating. All the troops were then ordered to retreat, and instead of being marched towards Upper Marlboro', where the enemy remained that night, (waiting, it is presumed, to be joined by the detachment which had been sent against commodore Barney's flotilla,) we were marched to the Battalion Old Fields, about eight miles distant from Upper Marlboro', and about the same distance from Washington. The same day we were joined by the crews of commodore Barney's flotilla. On Tuesday the 23d of August, the troops were drawn up in three or four lines, and reviewed by the president of the United States. The most contradictory reports prevailed at this time in our camp, respecting the strength and movements of the enemy. Our force at this place, from the best information I could collect, consisted of about four hundred horse, the flotilla men, amounting to about four hundred and fifty, one hundred and ten marines, about four hundred regulars of the 36th and 38th regiments, and about eighteen hundred militia from Maryland and the county of Washington. The militia of Alexandria county never joined us. About 12 o'clock the same day, the detachment of three hundred militia, which had been sent on the day before, were again ordered to advance towards the enemy. They met him on his march, about six miles in advance of our encampment, but with so great a disparity of force, that it was impossible for them to make a stand. After captain Stull's rifle company had fired about four rounds, the detachment was compelled to retreat, to prevent being surrounded by the enemy. About five o'clock P. M. after having remained some time in line of battle, we were ordered to retreat to Wash-

ington, and although our march on the retreat was extremely rapid, yet orders were occasionally given to the captains of companies to hurry on their men. The march, therefore, literally became a run of eight miles, and the propriety of this rapid movement, which unnecessarily fatigued and dispirited the men, may be tested by the fact, that the main body of the enemy bivouaced that night on the Melwood estate, more than three miles distant from the ground we had left.

On our arrival at the city, we encamped about half a mile from the Eastern Branch Bridge. About midnight a detachment of captain Burch's company, to which I was attached, was called up and ordered to move with three pieces of artillery to an eminence near the bridge, which was done. During the night, a boat, containing eight barrels of powder, was stationed underneath the bridge, under the charge of Mr. Forrest, of the navy, with orders to blow it up on the approach of the enemy. About sunrise, the remainder of our company joined us. We were shortly after ordered to pull down the rails of a neighboring fence, and place them on the bridge, in order that it might be effectually burnt, in case the explosion of gunpowder should not succeed in preventing the enemy from passing it. For the same purpose, the toll-house was ordered to be pulled down, and the planks placed on the bridge. About 10 o'clock the same day, our company was ordered to give up its position to commodore Barney, who had a number of heavier guns with him, and who immediately after took possession of the eminence we had occupied. About 11 o'clock we were ordered to march, and on arriving at the boundary line of the city, we halted a short time, until we were joined by the remainder of the troops; when we

continued our march to Bladensburg. At the distance of about a mile and a quarter from that town, the troops were halted, and shortly after captain Burch, with three of his pieces of artillery, was ordered to advance, and report himself to general Winder. Captain Burch immediately advanced with three of his pieces, and on reaching the left of the line of Baltimore militia, halted the men in the road, in order that he might look for general Winder and receive his orders. At this time the advance of the British was just entering the outskirts of Bladensburg, and the arms of a large body of them were seen glittering in the sun, about a mile from the town. Finding that captain Burch did not return as soon as might have been reasonably expected, and hearing that general Winder was a short distance from us, I marched our detachment of artillery towards the spot where he was, and on coming up to him, inquired what position I should take with our artillery. He addressed me as captain, and ordered me to place our pieces in battery on the left of the Baltimore line of infantry, which was immediately done. Shortly after he came up to us, and again addressing me, said, "When you retreat, take notice you must retreat by the Georgetown road," at the same time he pointed to a road which led from Digge's mill into the country, and passed near the position we had taken. Captain Burch soon after joined us. The time occupied in taking our position was sufficient to have enabled us, and also the troops that marched from the city, to take any position on the fields this side of Bladensburg. About a quarter of an hour after we had taken our position, the Baltimore artillery, which was posted in advance near the mill, (and shortly after, the Baltimore riflemen,) commenced firing on the enemy.

The artillery fired about ten rounds, as far as I could judge, and then retreated, with some of the Baltimore riflemen, towards our left. A few scattering British soldiers were soon after visible in the orchard before us, and they appeared to be forming behind a barn, which was about three hundred and fifty yards from our guns. We immediately commenced our fire upon them; and shortly after general Winder came behind our guns, and ordered us to direct our shot at the barn. We had scarcely fired three rounds, when the line of the Baltimore militia began to break; several of the 5th Baltimore regiment also fled. After we had fired about five rounds from our pieces, general Winder ordered us to retreat, in consequence, I presume, of the flight of the militia on our right. The British column had just then began to advance from the barn. Not a man of our company had been touched by the fire of the enemy, and I thought that the battle was only then seriously commencing. After retreating about a hundred yards, we were again ordered to unlimber our pieces; but this order was immediately after countermanded, and we were directed to continue our retreat. Our pieces were never after ordered into action; nor were we at any time told where to rally. The road by which we had been directed to retreat, and by which the principal part of the Baltimore troops also retreated, forked some miles from the battle ground, in three directions; one branch led by Rock Creek church to Tenly Town and Montgomery court house; another branch led to Georgetown; and the third to the city of Washington. Each individual, on the retreat, took the road that suited his inclination. For myself, having been separated, together with several of captain Burch's company, from our guns, which were before us,

and presuming that the principal part of the force had gone to Washington, I took the road leading to this place. On arriving at the capitol, I understood that the city had been abandoned by our troops, without further struggle, to the enemy. Our forces encamped that night at Tenly Town, about three miles back of Georgetown. The next day they marched to Montgomery court-house, and on the 26th August to Snell's Bridge, on the road to Baltimore, where I joined them, having never had it in my power before to do so. On Saturday, the 27th, the troops belonging to this district returned here. The enemy left the city on the night of the 25th.

From what I could discern of the line of the enemy's march on his entrance into Bladensburg, before the battle, I conjectured that his force amounted to about 5000 men. I afterwards collected from conversations with British prisoners, and from comparing together the several accounts they gave me, that it did not exceed 4400 men, including about 100 or 150 sailors, who were armed only with cutlasses. The enemy's artillery consisted of one howitzer, and two small pieces, drawn by men; and his whole force actually engaged in the battle, did not exceed 1200 men, as I was informed by two British officers and some prisoners. Our force, on the other hand, consisted of the troops that were with us on the Battalion Old Fields, amounting, in my opinion, to about 3160 men, together with about 2000 troops from Baltimore, and about 500 militia under colonel Beall, who joined us on the field of battle. Our artillery consisted of eighteen 6 pounders, under captains Peter, Burch, and Magruder, and two 18 pounders and three 12's under commodore Barney. The enumeration which I have given of our troops, may, in some

instances, be incorrect, as it is merely the result of general observation and inquiry. I would beg leave further to state, that the distance between Benedict and Washington, by the way of Bladensburg, is at least fifty miles, and that the whole of the intervening country is admirably calculated for every species of military operation.

I shall refrain, sir, from expressing any opinion on the manner in which our force was conducted and employed; but, in justice to general Winder, I will add, that he evinced no deficiency of personal courage or military coolness during the action.

With respect, I am, &c.

JOHN LAW.

No. 11.

Reports from the ordnance department.

United States' ordnance department,
Washington, 28th November, 1814.

SIR—In addition to the information which I have had the honor to give to the committee of investigation, upon the subject of the late invasion of this district by the enemy, I have to state:

That I have perused letters recently written by colonel D. Wadsworth to Daniel Carroll, esq. of this district, respecting the burning of the Potomac Bridge, and the destruction of the military stores deposited on the Virginia side thereof; which in substance contain a specific denial of either circumstances having taken place by his orders, or advice. He explicitly states, that the latter was occasioned by the corporal or non-commissioned officer commanding the guard, who, on the draws of the bridge having been broken by a violent tornado, and perceiving a body of the British ready to pass over,

concluded the surest and best measure to prevent it was to destroy, by fire, that end and part, where he was posted; and that the other end, on the Washington side, was fired by the enemy.

The military stores which had been placed at the end of the bridge, were destroyed by the event of firing that end.

I beg leave to take this occasion to repeat what I had the honor to state to you verbally, that having been personally conversant with colonel Wadsworth on the evening of the day of the battle of Bladensburg, and on the subsequent invasion of the city, the colonel at no time suggested to me, (though the next officer in command,) the necessity or expediency of firing the Potomac Bridge; and I have, consequently, no belief that such was his intention or order.

Lieutenant Baden who was directed to post the guard at the Virginia end of the bridge, and for the protection of the military stores, unequivocally and explicitly denies having given any similar order.

I beg leave to transmit here a more particular account of the stores furnished to Fort Washington; rendered, however, by the late decision of a court martial, less necessary than before.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN MORTON,

Captain and deputy com'y, acting for the com'y gen.
Hon. col. R. M. Johnson.

Ordinance department,

Washington, October 21, 1814.

SIR—In the absence of the commissary general, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter to this department, of the 15th current, requesting, in behalf of the committee of which you are chairman, "all the information in its power on the subject of their inquiry; more especially to state

what was the quantity and situation of the munitions of war within the District of Columbia, previous to, and at the time of, the invasion of the enemy in his recent enterprises against this metropolis."

The hurry with which many of those munitions were distributed, previous to, and at the time of, the invasion, and the dispersion and loss of some papers which gave some details thereof, necessarily render the reports from the several persons having charge of them, somewhat imperfect, and will render it difficult to give from this department more than (as follows) a general statement. This statement, however, will be substantially correct; and will perhaps tend to answer or satisfy the committee on the leading objects of the inquiry made of this office.

Presuming that the expression "munitions of war," was intended to include the ordnance within the district, I shall commence therewith, by stating, that there were, at the period alluded to, the following mounted cannon, viz:

8 24 pounders, cannon,	} Mounted on garrison car-
1 50 ditto, columbiad,	
1 18 ditto, ditto.	
2 18 pounders, cannon, complete for the field, on travel-	} riages, and forming the
ling carriages,	
5 12 ditto, ditto,	
6 6 ditto, ditto,	} battery, Greenleaf's Point.
3 24 ditto, howitzers,	
	ditto.

These last were in charge at the United States' arsenal, Greenleaf's Point; but occasionally distributed previous to the actual invasion of the city, as ordered; for instance, two 18 pounders, on traveling carriages, were placed in front of the capitol, for its defence; two 12 pounders in front of the president's house, and two near the general post-office, for the same purposes.

In addition to the foregoing, there were twelve 6 pounders, field artillery, furnished by the order of the late secretary of war, to, and in the service

of, the district corps of artillery; and two 12 pounders loaned to the marine corps of the United States.

The number of field artillery attached to the brigade of Alexandria, is not known to me; but it is presumed to have been four or six pieces.

Of ordnance stores, there were on hand at the United States' laboratory, exclusive, of course, of what had before been distributed, viz:

140 bbls. (14,000 lbs.) gunpowder of different kinds,

5 tons lead,

7,180 cannon cartridges, filled and empty (the empty are soon filled.)

8,650 rounds of round grape and cannister shot.

150 ten inch shells, with other stores of ordinary consumption, or expenditure, too numerous to detail.

In the military store and laboratory, viz:

Stands of arms, complete	-	-	2,993
Cartridge-boxes and belts	-	-	1,595
Bayonet-scabbards and belts	-	-	2,584
Flints	-	-	13,700
Musket cartridges of different kinds (single ball, and ball and buck shot)	}		271,000

The foregoing were on hand immediately preceding the invasion, after considerable distributions had been occasionally made to the regular troops and the militia, employed in different situations or parts of this section of the country; and equal, it is believed by me, to all their requisitions.

Of rifles it was impossible, though every exertion was made by this department, to procure a seasonable supply.

What is here offered to the honorable committee embraces, perhaps, all which is expected from this department; but if any additional objects of inquiry should occur, the undersigned will hold himself in readiness to furnish, either personally or in writing.

whatsoever may be required and remain further within his means of information.

I have the honor to be &c.

JNO. MORTON,

Deputy comm'y U. S. ordnance.

Hon. col. R. M. Johnson.

Ordnance department,
November 4, 1814.

SIR—In compliance with your verbal request, I have the honor to state to you, that by an ordnance return, bearing date the 30th June, ultimo, received at this office, there were at Fort Washington, on the Potomac,

2 32 pounders on fixed carriages (cannon.)

8 24 pounders on do. do.

2 50 pounders (columbiads) on ditto.

3 6 pounders on travelling do.

Of ordnance stores, there were,

132 rounds, 32 pounders,	} round shot.
432 do. 24 do.	

564 rounds shot,

99 flannel cartridges,	32 pounders,	} filled.
86 do. do.	24 pounders,	
88 do. do.	32 pounders,	} empty
405 do. do.	24 pounders,	
44 paper do.	32 pounders,	} (soon filled.)
177 do. do.	24 pounders,	
		} empty.

899 cartridges, filled and empty.

3100 lb. cannon powder.

246 lb. musket do.

100 musket cartridges.

291 lb. lead.

200 lb. junk.

137 lb. musket balls.

31 stand small arms.

From the 30th June, to August 27, there were furnished at Fort Washington, the following:

Four 18 pounders, (columbiads,) July 16.

Forty-eight stands of arms complete.

117 rounds ammunition for 18 pounders, columbiads,

205	do.	do.	18 do.	cannon.	
48	do.	do.	18 do.	grape,	} shot.
200	do.	do.	18 do.	round,	
240	do.	do.	6 do.	strap,	
60	do.	do.	6 do.	case,	
48	do.	do.	18 do.	do.	

232 tubes.

34 portfires.

33 lb. slow match.

The number of men stationed at Fort Washington is not precisely known at this office, but it is supposed by me, not to have exceeded sixty.

I regret that circumstances have delayed your receipt of this communication; but as your former written request confined my report to the *district*, more time has been required to ascertain the facts here stated, (particularly the supplies since the 30th June,) than would otherwise have occurred.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JNO. MORTON,

Captain and dep. com. U. S. ordnance.

Honorable colonel Johnson.

Return of fixed ammunition and ordnance stores delivered to Fort Washington, in the month of August, 1814, previous to the 24th of that month.

18 pd. round shot.	200	48	117	205	140	60	48	232	34	33	8126	22050	19	43	17
18 pd. grape.			Flannel cartridges filled for 18 pd. columbiads.	18 pd. cannon cartridges, flannel bottoms, filled.	6 pd. strap shot fixed.	6 pd. case shot fixed.	18 pd. case shot filled.	Tubes filled.	Portfires.	lbs. slow match.	Musket cartridges, buck and ball.	Musket cartridges, single ball.	Ammunition boxes.	Kegs.	Barrels.

No. 12.

Sentence of the court martial, in relation to captain Dyson, and the correspondence between him and the secretary of war.

War department, August 29, 1814.

SIR—I send captain Manigault with orders to receive your written or verbal report of the causes under which you left the post committed to your charge. In this you will state the orders under which you acted, and from whom received.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Captain Dyson, corps of artillery.

Camp at Mason's Island,

August 29, 1814.

SIR—I had the honor to receive your communication of the 29th instant. The orders received from brigadier general Winder, through major Hite, verbally, on the 24th instant, were, in case I was oppressed by, or heard of, an enemy in my rear, to spike our guns and make my escape over the river. The enemy approached by water on the 27th, and we had learnt on that day, through several channels, that the enemy had been reinforced at Benedict, 2,000 strong, and that they were on their march to co operate with the fleet, in addition to the force which left the city. Under all these circumstances, the officers under my command were consulted, and agreed it was best to abandon the fort, and effect a retreat. The force under my command, was thought not equal to a defence of the place.

I have the honor to be, &c.

SAM. T. DYSON,

Captain corps of artillery.

Honorable John Armstrong,
secretary of war, Washington.

Headquarters, 10th military district,
Baltimore, November 17, 1814.

General Orders.—At a general court martial whereof brigadier general Smith, of the militia of the District of Columbia, was president, which met at Washington city, and continued its sittings, by divers adjournments, until the 12th instant, captain Samuel T. Dyson, of the United States' corps of artillery, was tried on the following charges and specifications:

Charge first—Violating the 52d article of the rules and articles for the government of the armies of the United States.

Specification 1st. In that the said Samuel T. Dyson, being commanding officer of the United States' Fort Washington, did, on or about the 27th of August, 1814, when an enemy was approaching said fort, misbehave himself before the enemy, run away, and shamefully abandon the fort, post, and guard, which he then and there commanded, and which it was his bounden duty to defend, and speak words inducing others to do the like.

Specification 2d. In that the said Samuel T. Dyson, did, on or about the 27th day of August, aforesaid, at the post called Fort Washington, aforesaid, cast away and destroy his arms and ammunition, contrary to the said 52d article of the rules and articles of war, aforesaid, and to his duty as commanding officer.

Charge second—Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

Specification 1st. In that the said captain Samuel T. Dyson, being commanding officer of the United States' fort and garrison, at a place called Fort Washington, did, on or about the 27th day of August, 1814, misbehave himself, by dismantling and destroying said fort, which it was his bounden duty to preserve and defend,

Specification 2d. In that the said captain Samuel T. Dyson, did, on or about the 27th day of August, aforesaid, quit his post called Fort Washington, without any attempt to defend the same, and without any necessity therefor, from the presence of an enemy, did march off the garrison of the same, in violation of his duty, and contrary to his orders.

Specification 3d. In that the said captain Samuel T. Dyson, on or about the 27th day of August, 1814, being commanding officer of the garrison at Fort Washington, and an enemy being then in his vicinity, was so drunk and intoxicated, while on duty, that he abandoned and destroyed the fort which had been entrusted to his defence, and suffered the garrison of the same to disperse, without being pressed to the measure for the safety of himself and the garrison aforesaid.

R. H. WINDER,

Army judge advocate.

The court having heard all the evidence adduced, whether on the part of the prosecution or the defence, and after due deliberation thereon, pronounce the following sentence:

On the first specification of the first charge, the court find that captain Samuel T. Dyson, of the United States' corps of artillery, being commanding officer of the United States' fort, Fort Washington, did, on or about the 27th day of August, 1814, when an enemy was approaching said fort, misbehave himself before the enemy, and shamefully abandon the fort and post which he then and there commanded, and which it was his bounden duty to defend.

The court find the said captain Samuel T. Dyson guilty of the 2d specification of the first charge.

The court find the said captain Samuel T. Dyson guilty of the first charge.

In like full and deliberate manner, the court took

into consideration the second charge, and the three specifications attached to that charge.

The court find the said captain Samuel T. Dyson guilty of the first specification of the second charge.

The court find the said captain Samuel T. Dyson guilty of the second specification of the second charge.

The court acquit the said captain Samuel T. Dyson of the third specification of the second charge.

On the second charge, the court find the said captain Samuel T. Dyson guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer, but do not find him guilty of conduct unbecoming a gentleman.

The court do sentence the said captain Samuel T. Dyson to be dismissed the service of the United States.

The major general commanding the district, approves of the proceedings and sentence of the general court martial in the foregoing case, and accordingly pronounces Samuel T. Dyson dismissed the service of the United States.

The general court martial whereof brigadier general Smith is president, is hereby dissolved.

W. SCOTT.

By command,

FRANS. S. BELTAN,
Ass. adj. gen. 10th military district.

No. 13.

Report from the corporation of Alexandria, including the capitulation, and letter from general John Mason.

Alexandria, September 28, 1814.

SIR—I had the honor of receiving your letter of the 26th instant, by this day's mail, and hasten to comply with your request therein contained.

The enclosed printed statement is an official act of the common council of Alexandria, and contains a full and true account of the occupation of this town by the enemy, and of the circumstances connected with that event, and a copy of the terms imposed by captain Gordon, the commander of the British squadron, on the town of Alexandria. There was no correspondence between the common council and the enemy, other than that mentioned in the statement.

As you request a statement of any other proceedings of the town of Alexandria, in a corporate capacity, touching the inquiry embraced in the resolution, enclosed in your letter, I think it proper to state, that on the 8th of May, 1813, the common council appointed a deputation to wait on the president of the United States, and apprise him of the defenceless state of the town of Alexandria: accordingly the persons appointed, waited on the president, and represented to him the defenceless state of the town, and the fears of the citizens, that the navy yard, public buildings, and cannon foundry, would tempt the enemy to make an attack on the district. He observed, that the representation of any respectable body of men, was entitled to attention; and that the subject should be taken under consideration, or words to that effect.

On the 11th of May, in the same year, the common council appointed a committee to confer and co-operate with committees appointed by the constituted authorities of the city of Washington and Georgetown, relative to the defence of the district. These several committees, soon afterwards, met in the city of Washington, and appointed a sub-committee to wait on the secretary of war, and on the secretary of the navy, and to

solicit them to take measures for the defence of the district, and application on that subject, was accordingly made to them by the sub-committees. The common council of Alexandria, has appointed a committee to attend the committee of congress, appointed to inquire into the causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against the metropolis and Alexandria, who will give every information which may be required, of the proceedings of the common council, and of the citizens of Alexandria, in relation to the enemy.

I have the honor to be, &c.

CHAS. SIMMS.

A report of the committee of council on the late occupation of Alexandria, by a British squadron, under the command of captain James A. Gordon.

In Council, September 7, 1814.

Present—Thomas Herbert, president, John Gird, Andrew Fleming, Henry Nicholson, J. B. Paton, John Cohagen, James Millan, John Hunter, Reuben Johnston, R. I. Taylor, Wm. Veitch, Anthony Rhodes.

The following narrative of the occupation of this town by the enemy, and of the circumstances connected with that unfortunate transaction, having been submitted to council, and duly considered and examined, the council do unanimously concur therein; and it is thereupon ordered, that it be published in both of the papers printed in this town.

THOMAS HERBERT, *president*.

At a meeting of the committee of vigilance, this 7th of Sept. 1814,

Present—Charles Simms, mayor, Joseph Dean, Matthew Robinson, Jonah Thompson, Wm. Herbert, Thos. Vowell, Edmund I. Lee.

The following narrative of the occupation of the town of Alexandria by the British squadron, was submitted to the committee, who, upon examining the same, unanimously concur in it.

CHAS. SIMMS, *chairman*.

THOS. VOWELL, *secretary*.

A respect for the opinions of others, and a due regard for the character of the citizens of Alexandria, have induced the municipal authorities of the town, to exhibit to the public a faithful narrative of the occupation of Alexandria, by the British squadron, under the command of captain Gordon, together with the causes which led to that distressing event.

To those who are unacquainted with the situation and condition of Alexandria, in regard to its means of defence, it will be proper to state, that it is situate in the District of Columbia, upon the west bank of the river Potomac, about six miles below the city of Washington, the depth of water admitting large frigates to come to the very wharves of the town.

It is totally destitute of fortifications of any kind, and its protection against invasion by water, depended entirely upon a fort about six miles below the town, commonly known by the name of Fort Warburton, which was exclusively under the control of the government of the United States.

About the month of July last, it was announced that general Winder was appointed to the command of the 10th military district of the United States, comprehending the District of Columbia, and a portion of the adjoining states of Virginia and Maryland, including the city of Baltimore.

In consequence of reports that the enemy contemplated an attack upon the city of Washington,

the municipal authority of Alexandria, thought it advisable to appoint a committee of vigilance, for the purpose of procuring information of the approaches of the enemy, and of obtaining assistance and advice as to the measures which it might be proper to pursue for protection and defence. As soon as this committee was appointed, they caused representations to be made to general Winder, of the defenceless condition of the town, and earnestly entreated that some measures should be taken for its protection. General Winder was called on, because it had been distinctly understood, that the secretary of war would receive our communications through this channel only. From general Winder every assurance was made that could have been wished, that every thing in his power should be done for the protection of the town. His means, however, were very inconsiderable: he had no money to expend in fortifications, or even in the erection of batteries; and unless some defence of this sort could be obtained, the town would be exposed to the mercy of the enemy if he should approach by water, and should succeed in passing the fort. The committee of vigilance was duly impressed with the necessity of providing some adequate defence against an attack by water, and some of its members, under the authority of the committee, had repeated interviews with general Winder on this subject; in one of them, the president of the United States was present, and he was distinctly given to understand, that unless there was provided an adequate defence for the town, it would be at the mercy of the enemy, and would be compelled to make the best terms in its power. These representations and requests produced no other effect, than the repetition of the assurance of an earnest desire, on the part of ge-

neral Winder, to afford every assistance in his power.

On the 19th of August a levy, *en masse*, was made of the militia of the town and county of Alexandria, and on the 20th and 21st, they were ordered to cross the Potomac, and stationed between Piscataway and Fort Warburton. They took with them all the artillery which had been mounted at the expense of the corporation, except two 12 pounders, which were left without ammunition, and nearly all the arms belonging to the town. They left no men but the exempts from age and other causes, and a few who had not reported themselves, or had found substitutes, and it is not believed that, after their departure, one hundred effective armed men could have been mustered in town. The two iron 12 pounders remained until the 25th, when Alexandria being open to the enemy, then in full possession of Washington, they were removed at some distance from the town, by orders received from general Young.

On the night of the 24th, the Alexandria militia were ordered to recross the Potomac; they did so, and were marched through town, without halting, into the country, and without giving information to the authorities or inhabitants of the place of their destination; and on the evening of the 27th, when the fleet approached, the municipal authorities of the town knew not where they were. It has since appeared, that they were *then* stationed about nineteen miles from town, by the orders of general Winder. It is here proper to state, that general Winder, on the morning of the 24th, informed the members of the committee of vigilance, who waited on him, that he could send no part of the forces with him to Alexandria, but that he had ordered general Young to cross over to Alexan-

dria, if practicable, if not, to fall down the river. The committee of vigilance, on receiving this information, sent boats over to the Maryland shore, sufficient in number to bring over the whole of general Young's force at once; but when the boats reached him, he had received orders from the secretary of war to retain his position, as general Young, in a communication to the mayor, stated.

The committee of vigilance, despairing of obtaining any assistance from the general government, and having information of the rapid approach of the enemy towards the capital by land, and that their squadron was approaching Alexandria by water, deemed it their duty to recommend to the common council a resolution to the following effect: "That in case the British vessels should pass the fort, or their forces approach the town by land, and there should be *no sufficient force*, on our part, to oppose them, with any reasonable prospect of success, they should appoint a committee to carry a flag to the officer commanding the enemy's force about to attack the town, and to procure the best terms for the safety of persons, houses, and property, in their power." This recommendation was made on the day of the battle at Bladensburg, and, on the same day, was unanimously adopted by the common council.

The battle of Bladensburg having terminated in the defeat of our troops, and general Winder having been obliged to retreat from the capital towards Montgomery court house, about fifteen miles to the west of it, the city of Washington was left in the entire possession of the enemy. The citizens of Alexandria saw nothing to impede the march of the British to their town; saw nothing to restrain them from committing the most brutal outrages upon the female portion of the society,

having neither arms nor men to make defence with; the president of the United States and the heads of the departments were absent, and it was not known where they were to be found; no military commander or officer of the general government was present to direct or advise.

In this state of things, it was considered by the common council as their duty to send a flag to the British commander at Washington, to know what treatment might be expected from him, in case his troops should approach Alexandria, and should succeed in obtaining possession of the town. Admiral Cockburn, to whom the communication was made, assured the very respectable gentlemen who bore that flag, that private property, of all descriptions, should be respected; that it was probable that fresh provisions and some flour might be wanted, but that whatever they did take should be paid for.

While these things were going on in the city of Washington, the British squadron had been gradually ascending the Potomac, and on the 27th August, three days after the battle at Bladensburg, it reached Fort Warburton. No change had taken place in relation to the means of the defence of the town of Alexandria. Upon the fort did the safety of Alexandria now entirely depend. The citizens looked with great anxiety to this point for protection. But to their great surprise and mortification, and without the concurrence or wish of the municipal authority of the town, or of any member of it, the fort was abandoned, and the magazine blown up, by the United States' garrison, on the evening of the 27th, without firing a single gun. The following correspondence between the secretary of war and the commander at the fort, shows by what authority he acted:

Copy of a letter from the secretary of war to captain Dyson, dated 29th August, 1814.

SIR—I send captain Manigault with orders to receive your written or verbal report of the causes under which you left the post committed to your charge. In this you will state the orders under which you acted, and from whom received.

I am, sir, your most obdt. servt.

J. ARMSTRONG.

Capt. Dyson, corps of artillery.

Camp at Macon's Island, Aug. 29, 1814.

SIR—I had the honor to receive your communication of the 29th inst. The orders received from brigadier general Winder, through major Hite, verbally, on the 24th inst. were, in case I was oppressed by, or heard of, an enemy in my rear, to spike our guns and make my escape over the river. The enemy approached by water on the 27th, and we had learnt that day, through several channels, that the enemy had been reinforced at Benedict, 2000 strong, and that they were on their march to co operate with the fleet, in addition to the force which left the city. Under all these circumstances, the officers under my command were consulted, and agreed it was best to abandon the fort and effect a retreat. The force under my command was thought not equal to a defence of the place.

I have the honor to be, with great consideration, your obedient servant,

SAM. T. DYSON,

Capt. corps of artillery.

The hon. John Armstrong,
secretary of war, Washington.

This relinquishment of the fort decided the fate of Alexandria. Nothing was left to oppose the progress of the squadron, and on the morning of the 28th it passed the ruins of the fort on its way to the town; their barges had sounded a considerable distance above. About ten o'clock of the morning of the 28th, after the squadron was above the fort, the committee appointed by the council to bear the flag to the enemy, *in case they should pass the fort*, set out upon their mission, and proceeded to the ship commanded by captain Gordon. They requested to know what his intentions were in regard to the town of Alexandria. They were informed by captain Gordon that he would communicate his terms when he came opposite the town. But he assured them, that in the mean time, if the squadron was not molested by the inhabitants, the persons, houses, and furniture of the citizens should not be injured. One of the gentlemen who attended the flag was the mayor. Upon his return from the squadron, he was informed that a small detachment of cavalry from the army of general Hungerford, had been in town, probably for the purpose of reconnoitering the enemy; that it had remained but a short time. Upon inquiry it was understood that the army of general Hungerford was at that time about sixteen miles from Alexandria, on its march to that place, having followed the British squadron along the shores of Potomac a great part of its way up. The force of general Hungerford was composed of infantry and cavalry, with two or three small pieces of artillery, not calculated to afford any protection to the town.

The municipal authority of the town had received no advice of the approach of this army; and after the return of the flag, it was too late to en-

ter into any arrangement with general Hungerford for defence: he was too distant to afford relief.

The squadron having suspended its approach to the town, did not reach it until the evening of this day. On the morning of the next day, to wit, the 29th of August, it arranged itself along the town, so as to command it from one extremity to the other. The force consisted of two frigates, to wit, the *Sea Horse*, rating 38 guns, and *Euryalus*, rating 36 guns, two rocket ships, of 18 guns each, two bomb ships, of 8 guns each, and a schooner, of 2 guns, which were but a few hundred yards from the wharves, and the houses so situated, that they might have been laid in ashes in a few minutes. About ten o'clock in the morning of the 29th, captain Gordon sent to the mayor the following terms:

His majesty's ship *Sea Horse*, off Alexandria, the 29th August, 1814.

GENTLEMEN—In consequence of a deputation yesterday received from the city of Alexandria, requesting favorable terms for the safety of their city, the undermentioned are the only conditions in my power to offer:

The town of Alexandria (with the exception of public works) shall not be destroyed, unless hostilities are commenced on the part of the Americans; nor shall the inhabitants be molested in any manner whatever, or their dwelling houses entered, if the following articles are complied with

Art. 1. All naval and ordnance stores (public and private) must be immediately delivered up.

Art. 2. Possession will be immediately taken of all the shipping, and their furniture must be sent on board by the owners without delay.

Art 3 The vessels that have been sunk must be delivered up in the state they were in on the 19th of August, the day of the squadron passing the Kettle Bottoms.

Art. 4. Merchandise of every description must be instantly delivered up; and to prevent any irregularities that might be committed in its embarkation, the merchants have it in their option, to load the vessels generally employed for that purpose, when they will be towed off by us.

Art. 5. All merchandise that has been removed from Alexandria since the 19th instant, is to be included in the above articles

Art. 6. Refreshments of every description to be supplied the ships, and paid for at the market price by bills on the British government.

Art. 7. Officers will be appointed to see that the articles Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5, are strictly complied with, and any deviation or non compliance on the part of the inhabitants of Alexandria, will render this treaty null and void

I have the honor to be, &c.

JAMES A. GORDON,

Captain of his majesty's ship Sea Horse, and
senior officer of his majesty's ships before
Alexandria.

To the council of the town of Alexandria.

Upon the mayor's receiving them, he sent for the members of the committee of vigilance. These terms were borne by one of the officers of captain Gordon's frigate, who stated but one hour was allowed him to wait for a reply to them. Upon their being read by the mayor and the committee, it was observed to the officer by the mayor and one of the committee, that it would be impossible

that the common council could accede to several of them; that the municipal authority of the town had no power to recall the merchandise that had been sent out subsequent to the 19th of August. The reply of the officer was, in that case it would not be expected

He was further informed, that it would not be in the power of the common council to compel the citizens to assist in getting up the sunken vessels. The officer answered that their sailors would then do it. He was required to explain what was intended by the term merchandise as used in the fourth article. He answered that it was intended to embrace that species of merchandise only which was intended for exportation, such as tobacco, flour, cotton, bale goods, &c.

The mayor and one of the committee requested to know whether the commodore intended to require a delivery of any more of the merchandise than he could take away with him. He answered it would not be required. This explanation was afterwards recognized by captain Gordon. With these verbal explanations the preceding terms were submitted to the common council. It will be here proper to remark, that when these terms were proposed and submitted to the common council, general Hungerford had not arrived with his army, nor did it reach the suburbs of the town, until the night of that day. The town was still without any means of defence, and it was evident that no defence could avail, but that species of force which would be calculated to drive the ships from their moorings. No communication had been received from the officers of the general government, and the town appeared to be abandoned to its fate. Under these circumstances the common council could have no hesitation as to the

course to be pursued. The citizens of the town, of all descriptions, with an immense value of property, were entirely in the power of the enemy, whose naval commander, according to the proclamation of the president of the United States, dated on the first of September, has declared his "purpose to be to employ the force under his direction, in destroying and laying waste such towns and districts upon the coast as may be found assailable." A similar declaration had been made by captain Gordon to the committee who bore the flag. Against the attack of such an enemy was the town of Alexandria without any means of defence whatever. The people of the town were at his mercy, and compelled to yield to such terms as the "victor" might think fit to prescribe. If the members of the municipal authority, and citizens of the town, had given loose to the feelings of indignation which the occasion had excited, and had sacrificed the town, and exposed their wives and daughters to the wanton insults of an unrestrained enemy, they would have betrayed their trusts and have deplored the consequences.

The common council, therefore, were obliged to yield submission to the terms as explained, and did thereupon pass and publish the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the common council of Alexandria in assenting to the conditions offered by the commander of the British squadron now off the town, has acted from the impulse of irresistible necessity, and solely from a regard to the welfare of the town; that it considers the assent by it given as only formal, inasmuch as the enemy had it already in their power to enforce a compliance with their demand by a seizure of the property required from us; and believing the safety of the

persons of the inhabitants, of their dwellings, and of such property as is not comprehended within the requisition, to depend entirely on the observance of the terms of it, the common council recommends to the inhabitants an acquiescence, at the same time it does expressly disclaim the power of doing any act on its part to enforce compliance, its authority in this particular being limited to commendation only."

In the execution of the terms imposed by the enemy, it is proper to state, that the verbal explanations made by the officer to the mayor, were generally adhered to. No merchandise was required to be brought back to the town; no assistance was required of or offered by the citizens in getting up the sunken vessels. The depredations of the enemy, with a few exceptions, were confined to flour, cotton, and tobacco, which they carried off in some of the vessels then at the town; only one vessel was burnt; no private dwelling was visited or entered in a rude or hostile manner, nor were citizens personally exposed to insult.

The loss sustained from the enemy it is believed will not exceed the following: three ships, three brigs, several bay and river craft, the number of which has not been ascertained; all of which were carried away, and one ship burnt. The quantity of flour carried away it is believed will not exceed sixteen thousand barrels; about one thousand hogsheads of tobacco, one hundred and fifty bales of cotton; and of wine, sugar, and other articles, not more than five thousand dollars worth.

I, Israel P. Thompson, clerk of the common council of Alexandria, do certify that the above is a true copy from the original.

ISRAEL P. THOMPSON, C. C.

October 6, 1814

Alexandria, October 7, 1814.

SIR—In pursuance of the enclosed resolutions of the common council of Alexandria, dated the 27th September, 1814, marked A. appointing us a committee, on the part of the town, for the purpose therein mentioned, we beg leave to lay before the committee of congress the following statement, and accompanying documents.

Misrepresentations of the conduct of the citizens of Alexandria, when the British squadron approached this place, having been circulated through the union, the common council have deemed it their duty to lay before congress a true history of the steps which the citizens have from time to time taken, in order to guard against that misfortune which has come upon them, a misfortune they deplore as much on the national, as on their own individual account. The citizens of Alexandria rejoice that an opportunity has been afforded them to lay before congress a faithful narrative of the proceedings which self preservation compelled them to adopt; it will show that they did all in their power to avert the blow.

In the month of October, 1812, a volunteer company was raised in Alexandria, and stationed at Fort Washington, in the manner stated in the letter of captain M'Guire, marked B. In the month of March, 1813, the artillery company of Alexandria, then commanded by captain Marsteller, was stationed at Fort Washington; see captain Griffith's certificate, marked C. On the 21st March, 1813, the common council appointed the mayor of the town and the president of the council to wait upon the secretary of war, in company with the colonel of the second legion, to request a supply of arms and ammunition for the use of the militia, in the defence of the town; see document

D. On the 8th of May, 1813, the common council appointed four respectable citizens to wait upon the president of the United States, and apprise him of the defenceless state of the town, which order is marked E. That committee, in compliance with the wishes of the corporation, did wait on the president; the result of the interview they had with him will be found in the paper marked F. On the 8th of May, 1813, the council appropriated \$ 1500, out of the funds of the corporation, for mounting the cannon belonging to the town; see document marked D. On the 11th May, 1813, the common council appointed a committee of vigilance, to confer and co-operate with the committees of Washington and Georgetown, in requiring assistance from government for the general defence of the District of Columbia; see document E. A deputation from the committees of the three towns waited upon general Armstrong, the result of their conference was such as is stated in the certificate of colonel George Deneale, one of the persons who waited upon the secretary of war; see his certificate marked G.

The secretary of war did send an engineer, as he promised, who made a report to him, a copy of which is hereto annexed, and is marked H. The common council, on the 23d of July, 1814, passed two resolutions, and appointed a committee of vigilance, for the purposes in said resolutions expressed; see E. In pursuance of these last resolutions, the committee of vigilance proceeded to take such measures as they could towards complying with the object of their appointment; they passed the resolutions which are marked I. In pursuance of the first resolution of the committee of vigilance, general Winder was waited upon, and a few days after he visited Alexandria, had an in-

terview with some of the committee of vigilance, and colonel Deneale, as will appear by the certificate of colonel Deneale, marked K.

The banks of Alexandria and Potomac, on the 6th and 13th of August, loaned to the general government, the one ten thousand, and the other twenty five thousand dollars, upon the conditions that the same should be applied to the erection of fortifications for the District of Columbia south of Alexandria; see the letters of the presidents of those banks, marked L and M. The corporation, on the fifteenth of September, 1814, appropriated, out of the funds of the town, twelve hundred dollars, for the purpose of paying the expenses of laborers and carts, to be employed in the erection of fortifications for the defence of the district; see document D

The committee having laid before you the documents which exhibit the efforts of the citizens of Alexandria, to have the town defended from invasion, beg leave to lay before the committee a report of the common council and committee of vigilance, dated on the 7th of September last, of the conduct of the citizens, when the British squadron approached Alexandria; see document marked N. When the first attempt was made, on the 25th of August, to blow up the south end of the Potomac Bridge six hundred stand of arms were blown up, about two hundred of which remained uninjured, and fit for use; these were collected together by Mr Joseph Dean, one of the committee of vigilance, and sent to the Little Falls of Potomac for safety. When general Hungerford's army arrived in the neighborhood of Alexandria, these arms were ordered to be delivered to general Hungerford; see Mr. Dean's certificate, O. On the 30th of August the mayor apprized general

Hungerford where two twelve pounders, which had been, by the order of general Young, removed from town, could be found; see the mayor's letter, marked P, and the reply of general Hungerford, signed by James Mercer, his aid, marked Q.

The day on which the enemy left Alexandria, a letter purporting to be from admiral Codrington, dated 28th August, 1814, addressed to the commanding officer of the British squadron, in the Potomac, with the cover which now encloses it, was handed from the post office in this place, to Mr. Joseph Dean, one of the committee of vigilance; how it got into the post office we know not; we can refer the committee to Mr. Thomas P. Gilpen, the deputy postmaster here, and to Mr. Basil Spalding, of Maryland, who, we have reason to believe, can give some account of the route the letter came to Alexandria; this document is marked R.

If the committee should require any further information, or explanation, we shall be ready, at all times, to give it, as far as we can.

We are, with great respect, &c.

WM. NEWTON,
EDM. J. LEE,
JOSEPH DEANE,
G DENEALE.

Hon. R. M. Johnson, &c.

Alexandria, Nov. 20, 1814.

SIR—From the appearance of the enemy's squadron in sight of Alexandria, on the evening of the 27th of August last, until its departure, on the 3d of September, I remained in town, with the exception of an absence of a few hours on the day last mentioned.

Amongst the many base calumnies propagated respecting our unfortunate town, by men more profligate than the enemy who plundered us, there is none more cruel and unfounded than the charge of the inhabitants having surrendered the property of strangers to procure safety for their own.

The printed narrative of the common council contains all the material facts connected with the capture of the town, and it is not in my power to add any thing of importance. The charge above mentioned, which you have particularly noticed in your letter of the 19th instant, I can assure you, is totally destitute of truth. The people of Alexandria did not afford the enemy any assistance in removing or shipping the plundered property: nor did any instance, to my knowledge, occur of any individual having attempted to save his own property by turning the attention of the enemy towards that of another. In respect to persons, the plunder was indiscriminate. The enemy not having the aid of horses or carriages for the removal of the property, from a regard to their own convenience, and not from the suggestions of others, confined their depredations to the warehouses on the water, in which large quantities of produce were contained, belonging to the inhabitants as well as to strangers, all sufferers alike.

After the common council had passed their resolution of the 29th of August, declaring their want of authority to require the observance of the terms to which they had been compelled to accede, and recommending submission, they did no other act at all connected with the seizure or surrender of property.

I remain, with respect, &c.

R. I. TAYLOR.

The Hon. R. M. Johnson.

To the honorable the senate and house of representatives of the United States of America in congress assembled, the memorial of the subscribers, citizens of the town of Alexandria, respectfully represents:

That the late capture by the British squadron of their town, has afforded a pretext to wanton defamers, to brand the citizens of Alexandria with every epithet of ignominy and disgrace. Not content with proclaiming their slanders through the papers of the day, some have been so unprincipled as to whisper in the ears of some of the honorable members of your body, the most illiberal accusations; one of which is, that the property of the citizens, taken from them by the violence of the invading enemy, had been voluntarily parted with by the inhabitants, and an equivalent received for it; a charge totally unfounded in fact, and without the smallest ground of truth for its support, as your memorialists can venture to assert, that not a solitary instance of the kind can be produced. When, therefore, your memorialists find the reputation of the town assailed in public and private, by those dark and restless spirits whose delight it is to devour reputation, every virtuous and honorable mind must feel it a solemn duty to solicit, as a right, from their constitutional governors, a strict and just investigation into the whole of their conduct. The citizens of Alexandria, in the aggregate, can fear the result of no inquiry which may be made into their conduct, on the occasion alluded to. They know their motives have been pure, and that the course they took can be justified by those immutable principles of self preservation, for the exercise of which, no just government will condemn them, and the surrender of which cannot of right be demanded. Your memorialists cannot forbear, on

this occasion, to express their indignant surprise to find their town traduced, for a conduct which every citizen in the nation would have pursued, had they been abandoned as Alexandria was, to the mercy of a victorious and powerful enemy. In this situation, what alternative had we but to tell the enemy we could not resist, because we had not the means. This is all we did. We yielded to superior power. Our weakness has been our crime. Our reliance upon the protection of our government has been our misfortune. For this misfortune have the citizens of Alexandria been publicly charged as traitors to their country. To submit to calumny of this nature without a murmur, is more than could be calculated upon. To ask an investigation is what ought to be expected from the virtuous and innocent. This request is the more reasonable when it is recollected that the president of the United States has deemed it proper, in his public proclamation, to state that Alexandria had, in yielding to the terms imposed upon them, "inconsiderately" surrendered to the enemy. Your memorialists deem it a duty which they owe to the reputation of the town, concisely to state what have been the efforts, at different times, of the citizens, to obtain an adequate defence of the town and district.

In the month of October, in the year 1812, a few months after the declaration of war, a company of about seventy volunteers was raised in Alexandria, and equipped at the expense of some of the citizens. This company was under the orders of the general government, who had them stationed at Fort Washington, where they continued for some months, and from thence removed to Annapolis, at which place they were disbanded.

In the month of March, in the year 1813, the

artillery company, forming a part of the militia of the town, consisting of about seventy men, rank and file, was stationed for about three months at Fort Washington. The municipal authority of the town, conscious of its unprotected state, and justly considering it the duty of the general government, to defend every portion of that territory which was placed under its exclusive authority, on the 21st of March, 1813, appointed the chief magistrate of the town, the president of the common council, together with the commanding officer of the second legion of the militia of the district, to wait upon the secretary of war, and request a supply of arms and ammunition for the use of the militia in the defence of the town. Your memorialists have reason to believe that arms were furnished a short time after this request.

In the month of May, 1813, the common council sent four respectable citizens to the president of the United States, to apprise him of the then defenceless state of the town. These gentlemen did wait upon and communicate to him what was the condition of Alexandria as to the means of defence; that the citizens felt great anxiety on account of the dangers with which they were threatened from the vicinity of the enemy in our waters, and the defenceless state of the district, and requested him to have some measures of defence and protection adopted as *speedily* as possible. To this request the president stated, that every portion of the community was entitled to the protection of the government, and that representations of any respectable body of men had a claim upon its attention, and gave the gentlemen who waited upon him to understand that their representation would be properly attended to; he also stated it was impossible to extend protection to every *assailable point* of

the country. The committee urged upon him the various circumstances which would invite the attack of the enemy upon the *city of Washington* in particular, which would of course involve the whole district in its dangers. The committee at the same time assured him of the perfect readiness of the citizens of Alexandria, to co-operate, by their personal services, or in any other way, with the government in any measure of defence which it might adopt for the security of the district.

The common council, solicitous to provide for the defence of the town and district, as far as their limited powers and means would permit, did, in the month of May, 1813, appropriate out of the funds of the corporation, fifteen hundred dollars, to pay for mounting some cannon, which were in the town, and had been in the use of the militia while under the state government. In the month of May, 1813, a deputation from Alexandria, Washington, and Georgetown, had an interview with the secretary of war, relative to the defenceless situation of the district. This committee did urge, that a more efficient defence might be afforded for the district than then existed. It was particularly urged upon the secretary, that the fortifications at Fort Washington, commonly known by the name of Fort Warburton, should be increased. In consequence of this representation, the government sent an engineer to examine the fort, who, on the 28th of May, 1813, reported to the war department, as the result of his examination, that "an additional number of heavy guns at Fort Warburton, and an additional fort in the neighborhood, are both to be considered unnecessary." Notwithstanding the repeated solicitations of the citizens of Alexandria, in the year 1813, nothing was done towards its defence, except send-

ing an engineer to examine the fort. In silence did Alexandria submit to this neglect of their safety, until the month of July, 1814, when the common council again endeavored to procure an adequate defence. Gentlemen, acting under the authority of the corporation, in the month of July, waited upon the military commander of the tenth district, with the view of ascertaining what measures of defence had been taken, or were intended to be adopted, for the defence of the town of Alexandria and district. The general, who seemed to be anxious to do his duty, as far as the means within his control would enable him, stated to those gentlemen the number of militia he expected would join him, and which seemed to be all the defence he calculated upon. This was a species of defence which certainly could be of no use against an attack by water. It is too obvious, that the town of Alexandria could not be defended in any other manner than by a proper fort or forts below it, with a competent garrison. The general commanding the tenth military district visited Alexandria. The mode of defending it from a water attack was pointed out to him. To adopt it, required money; this he was not furnished with. This difficulty, however, was removed, by the offer of three of the banks in Alexandria to loan the government fifty thousand dollars, for the purpose of erecting proper defences for the district. Which loan was accepted, and the money paid to the government. No steps were taken towards securing the town from attack by water, but it was left to be defended at the fort, by a garrison not exceeding eighty men, rank and file. On the 24th of August, a few hours before the battle at Bladensburg, the commanding general and president of the United States were, by the authority of the

committee of vigilance of Alexandria, reminded of the destitute state of the town as to the means of defence, and informed what would be the deplorable alternative the citizens would be reduced to, if the British squadron, which was approaching the town, and was then from twenty to thirty miles below, should find their town unprotected as it was at that time. In the afternoon of the 27th of August, the squadron arrived at the fort, (the magazine having been blown up, and it abandoned by the few troops of the United States which had been stationed there,) without opposition. On the morning of the 28th, after the fort had been destroyed by the enemy, and after their vessels had passed it, and were in full view of the town, *and not before*, no officer, military or civil, of the United States being, on this emergency, in the town or district to defend or direct, (the military of the town having been previously marched off, *en masse*, by public authority,) the municipal authority of the town were, from extreme necessity, compelled to take such steps as were best calculated to save the town from conflagration. They authorized a flag to meet the advancing foe. The result of that interview was, that the town and a certain part of the property was saved from destruction and plunder, upon condition that the enemy, during their continuance before the town, should not be molested. It is due to the citizens of Alexandria, who were in it during that distressing period, to state, that no aid or assistance was offered by them to the enemy. They remained passive but indignant spectators of that plunder, which they had not the means of preventing. In support of the various allegations, stated in the preceding part of this memorial, your memorialists beg leave to refer to documents laid before the

committee of the house of representatives, upon the subject of the capture of Alexandria and Washington. Your memorialists feel it their duty, more particularly, to call the attention of congress to a subject connected with the capture of Alexandria, and which is enveloped in a mystery, that can be dissipated only by the power of your honorable body

On the 29th of August, the British squadron commenced taking off from the warehouses the flour and tobacco. They continued until Friday morning, the 2d of September, when the last loaded vessel was sent down the river. The post office in Alexandria had, during the time the fleet lay opposite the town, been removed into the country some miles. On Friday, the 2d of September, the postmaster found in the letter box of the house which had been used as the post office, the following letter, to wit:

“ Iphigenia, 28th August, 1814.

The object of the expedition being accomplished, and the inhabitants of the country, upon the banks of the Potomac, being alarmed for their property, on account of the presence of the British squadron on that river, the commander in chief has directed me to forward openly, by the hands of one of the inhabitants, this order, for the ships in the Potomac to retire and rejoin his flag.

EDWD. CODRINGTON,

Rear admiral, and captain of the fleet.”

This letter is directed as follows:

“ On H. B. M. service, to the commanding officer of H. B. M. ships in the river Potomac.”

The preceding letter was found in the post-office, inclosed in a letter without name, date, or post-mark, addressed “To the committee of vigi-

lance or safety of the town of Alexandria," which is in the following words:

"GENTLEMEN—Motives of a personal nature prevent my delivering the enclosure. You will best judge of the propriety of doing it in your official character, *without loss of time.*"

The above did not come to the knowledge of the committee of vigilance, until after the squadron had left the town with their plunder. Your memorialists have been enabled to ascertain, that the letter from admiral Codrington was in the office of state, early in the morning of the 31st of August, and that it was there read. Among those who saw it there was a member of your honorable body. How or when it was sent from the department of state, or why it was sent in the manner it was, or by whom it was deposited in the deserted post-office at Alexandria, your memorialists have not been able to ascertain, nor is it in their power to do so. Your memorialists have deemed it their duty to lay the transaction, so far as it has come to their knowledge, before your honorable body. It remains for congress to take such further steps for the development of the transaction, as in their wisdom shall seem to be proper, and which justice to the citizens of Alexandria demands.

All which is most respectfully submitted.

Jacob Hoffman,
Bathurst Daingerfield,
John Roberts,
George Coleman,
W. Veitch,
R. F. Degge,
A. Faw,
Thomas Steel,
James Keith,

Thomas Moore,
Charles Simms,
Ephraim Gilman
William S. Moore,
William Newton,
Charles J. Catlett,
John Hooff,
Henry T. Compton,
John Muncaster,

John Gird,
 John B. Paton,
 Joseph Smith,
 Thomas Laurason,
 Nehemiah Carson,
 C. P. Thompson,
 Isaac Gibson,
 John D. Brown,
 William N. Mills,
 William H. Brown,
 Grafton Cawood,
 Joseph Rowen,
 Sandford Reid,
 Henry B. Deager,
 Mark Butts,
 Robert N. Windsor,
 Jm. Plummer,
 Peter Saunders,
 Thomas Neill,
 John Violet, t,
 Gerrard Plummer,
 Jacob Curtis,
 John Potter,
 Ch. Whiting,
 Jonathan Ross,
 Barnard Crook,
 Philip G. Marsteller,
 Thomas Preston,
 Alexander Mackenzie,
 J. Laurason,
 William Fowle,
 John Lloyd,
 John Harper,
 Townshend Waugh,
 Matthias Snyder,
 Isaac Entwisle,
 Samuel Harper,
 Thomas M. Davis,
 William Harper,
 Joseph Harris,
 S. Snowden,
 Henry Bayne,
 Thomas Jacobs,
 Thomas Vowell,
 Thomas Herbert,
 William Smith,

Jacob Leap,
 Ebenezer Vowell,
 Anthony Rhodes,
 Matthew Robinson,
 Bryan Hampson,
 James Kennedy, sen.
 Silas Reed,
 Guy Atkinson,
 Benjamin Baden,
 Joseph Mandeville,
 Samuel B. Larmaur,
 Joseph Fowler, jun.
 A. Newton,
 N. Herbert,
 John Jackson,
 William Bartleman,
 William Tilham,
 Thomas F. Herbert,
 J. D. Simms,
 J. B. Nickolls,
 C. T. Chapman,
 Samuel Smith,
 Charles M^cKnight,
 Israel P. Thompson,
 William Herbert,
 James Campbell,
 James Fleming,
 Robert Anderson,
 William Harper, jun.
 Thomas Janney, & co.
 Samuel Mark,
 Thomas Brocchus,
 Jacob Morgan,
 William Gregory,
 Thomas K. Beall,
 Andrew Fleming,
 John H. Phillips,
 Henry Nicholson,
 John D. Longden,
 Daniel M^cClean,
 Frederick Koonas,
 David Koonas,
 Charles Bennett,
 James Shethar,
 John H. Crease,
 Joseph Cowing,

Newton Keene,
William Fox,
Thomas White,
William Ramsay of D.

John Ross,
John F. Smith,
James Allison.

Georgetown, October 31, 1814.

SIR—In reply to your letter of the 28th instant, requesting, on the part of the committee of investigation, “all the information I have on the subject of a letter from admiral Codrington to captain Gordon,” I have the honor to state, that on the morning of the 31st August, some hours before day, I was called up by a dragoon express from one of our camps below, who delivered a packet addressed to me by admiral Cochrane; while I was opening and examining the despatch, the dragoon, who seemed to be an intelligent man, remarked to me that the British ships before Alexandria had been ordered down the river by the admiral in the Patuxent. On questioning him, he stated that an open note to that effect, addressed to the British commander at Alexandria, had been brought to the camp from which he came. by the same messenger who had charge of the despatch I had just received from him; that he had understood both had been put into the hands of a countryman, on the shores of the Patuxent, by the enemy, from which countryman they had been taken by an American officer, and conveyed to the camp; that he heard the officer who had given him charge of the packet for me, speak of the manner in which they came, and mention the contents of the open note to other officers then near him; that the officers, as he heard them say, intended to send the note across the country, and have it put on board the British fleet by a citizen.

The letter addressed to me by admiral Cochrane was dated on the 29th of August. Under the same envelope was a letter directed to the secretary of state, believing that it might be of importance he should receive this without delay, I immediately, although not yet day, called on colonel Monroe, then acting as secretary of war, delivered the letter, and informed him of what the dragoon had reported to me relative to the open note, said to be on its way to the enemy's fleet before Alexandria. This, I am confident, was the first information received at Washington of the note in question. During the latter part of the same day, being at colonel Monroe's quarters, (I think about 1 o'clock,) he told me that the open note of which I had apprized him in the morning, had now found its way to him, having been brought up by one of our officers from the camp, at which the dragoon had stated he had left it, and he showed it to me. I have no recollection of its date. I remember that it was addressed to captain Gordon, and signed by Codrington, I think, as captain of the fleet and by order of admiral Cochrane. The substance, I well recollect, was to direct captain Gordon to descend the Potomac, lest alarm for their property should be given to the inhabitants by the presence of his squadron.

The contents of this note, as well as the manner chosen by the enemy for its conveyance, if it did come from him, were thought not a little singular and suspicious. The communication by water was open to him; and to express his anxiety for the fears of the inhabitants about the safety of their property from a force which had been for two years in the constant habit of burning and carrying it off, in every direction, on these waters, and which was at that moment emptying the

stores of Alexandria of private property to an immense amount, could hardly be considered earnest; and particularly when this expression was contrasted with his determination, to destroy and lay waste every district of country within his power, made known by the letter of admiral Cochrane to the secretary of state, of the 18th August, (since published,) which was the letter delivered by me that morning, and with which this note was understood to have come, from admiral Cochrane's fleet. Colonel Monroe took this view of the subject, and expressed his suspicions that the note was a forgery, and the possibility, if it was genuine, that by previous concert, it might be intended to convey something different from, perhaps the very reverse of, what appeared on its face. Under these circumstances, and in the then state of things, a preparation going on to intercept the British ships below Alexandria, some doubts were entertained of the propriety of permitting it to pass to them; he, however, determined that it should be disposed of in such a way as to let the citizens of Alexandria have the benefit of it, if benefit there was, and at the same time, to keep the enemy in ignorance that the government had any knowledge of it. He requested me to take charge of the note, to deliver it to a gentleman of Alexandria, and to ask of him to give it such a course immediately. I did accordingly, in about an hour after, put it into the hands of a highly respectable citizen of that town, accompanied by the request enjoined on me. He undertook the charge with great cheerfulness, and suggested, as the best mode of answering the purpose intended, that he would place it in the post office at Alexandria, under cover, addressed to one of the acting committees of the town, remarking that it

would reach them in that way almost as speedily as if he were to deliver it himself, and that by this means, the committee and himself would be relieved from embarrassment, if the committee were called upon to answer by the officers of the enemy, in whose power they were, as to the channel through which it had been received. I thought his reasons good, and approved of the mode he proposed to adopt. That he did so deposite the note, in the course of the same afternoon, I was informed by him on the next day; and I have no question of the fact.

Whether the enemy received this note, or when, and if received, what influence it may have had on his conduct, I have never learned; but there is one fact notorious on this subject:—that he ceased to levy contributions on the town of Alexandria, about the middle of the day on which commodore Porter's battery reached the White House, (the position below Alexandria, selected from which to annoy him in his descent,) and that he immediately after began to draw off his ships from the station he had taken before the town. This was on the first day of September. Commodore Porter's artillerists, and general Young's brigade, crossed the ferry at Georgetown, on the expedition, at the commencement of the night of the 31st August. That this movement was known to the enemy on the next day, and instantly arrested his devastations at Alexandria, I have never had the slightest doubt. As to the time and circumstance of the movement, I cannot be mistaken, as I was with both the corps during that night, one at their encampment, and the other on their march.

In relation to the remaining part of your letter, there are no particular facts within my knowledge, that I am aware of, pertinent to the inquiry

of the honorable committee into the cause of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against Washington and Alexandria.

With very great respect, &c.

J. MASON.

The Hon. Richard M. Johnson, &c.

No. 14.

Report from the superintendent of the public buildings.

Office of superintendent of the
city of Washington, Oct. 29, 1814.

SIR—In answer to the inquiries you made of me yesterday, I have the honor to state, that the whole cost of the under-mentioned public buildings, from the commencement, to the burning by the enemy, appears as follows:

North wing of the capitol, including the foundation walls of both wings, and of the centre or main building, and of alterations and repairs,			\$457,388 36
South wing of the capitol,			329,774 92
President's house,			334,334 00½
Public offices,			93,613 82

\$1,215,111 10½

At the instance of a committee of the senate, the remains of those buildings have been examined by architects and master builders, all of whom report it as their opinions, that the walls of the president's house, and both wings of the capitol, with some inconsiderable repairs, will be safe and sufficient to rebuild on. The walls of the two offices, particularly of the upper stories, are deemed insuffi-

cient to bear new roofs, and will require taking down and renewing, as far as shall be found necessary. The amounts of the estimates for repairing and rebuilding the five edifices, making the offices fire proof, with some other improvements suggested, are from 350,000 dollars, to upwards of 600,000 dollars. The largest estimate, however, embraces an expense of considerable amount, for completing the west part of the north wing for a library, which none of the lower estimates includes. The average amount estimated, of putting all the buildings in the state the enemy found them, appears, by dividing the aggregate amount of the estimates, by the number of them, to be about 460,000 dollars, allowing for the materials of the burnt buildings, which may be used in rebuilding.

I have the honor to be, &c.

THOMAS MUNROE.

The honorable B. M. Johnson.

No. 15.

William Simmons' letter.

Washington city, November 28, 1814.

SIR—In answer to your note of to-day, I have to state, that on the morning of the 24th August last, when the alarm was given that the enemy were on their march to this city, and it was expected that they would come by the way of the Eastern Branch Bridge, being myself well armed and mounted on horseback, I rode there under the wish to render all the service in my power to oppose them. When I arrived near the Eastern Branch, I found a few of the city and Georgetown uniform companies there, laying upon their arms;

and understood that the president, the secretary of war, and other officers, were at the house of a Mr. Minnifee, (where I observed their horses at the door,) and that they were holding council. I then rode down to the bridge, where there were a few sailors, with a piece or two of cannon in front of the bridge, who, I understood, were to destroy the bridge in case the enemy approached; after but little delay, I rode back to the uniform troops, who, I found, were getting in motion to march to Bladensburg, to which way it was then said that the enemy were coming. I immediately rode on towards Bladensburg with all expedition; when I arrived upon the hill, on this side of the Bladensburg bridge, I observed colonel Monroe, the then secretary of state, just in the rear of our troops, which were posted on both sides of the road, between there and Bladensburg; the cry was that the enemy were coming, but no person appeared to be able to give any correct account of them. I then observed to Mr. Monroe, that I would go on and see the enemy, and would let them know when they were coming. I accordingly rode into Bladensburg and halted a few minutes at Ross' tavern, where there was a few militiamen, from whom I could get no other information than that the enemy were coming on the river road; I then proceeded to a height, a little west of Ross' tavern, called Lownds' Hill, which had a commanding prospect of the river road for a considerable distance, and which was almost fronting the hill; after remaining there for some time, I observed, at a considerable distance, a great cloud of dust rise to a great degree, which satisfied me that they were coming in great force: some time after I observed a few horsemen, not in uniform, on the road, who appeared to be re-

connoitering, and were soon followed by troops that filled the road; they appeared to march very slow and in close order, not less than twenty-four or thirty abreast in front, and the horsemen before spoken of sometimes in front, and at other times a little to the right of the front, which position they marched in until they nearly approached the foot of the hill, and not more than a gunshot from me where I was sitting on my horse, and the road in full sight for near a mile, and that filled with British troops, and still approaching. At this time there was not a person in sight of me other than the enemy, except one dragoon, who appeared to have been posted there a little to my left, upon the same hill, where I left him, and have since understood he was taken by the advance party of the enemy. When they approached to the foot of the hill, and I expected they might attempt to cut off my retreat to the bridge, I fell back, and descended the hill in the front of Mr. Lownds' house, and immediately after I crossed the bridge, I looked back and found that the advance party of horse had got into the Annapolis road, to the east of Lownds' house, and about twenty four of them went up a lane in Bladensburg towards the Baltimore road, leaving six or eight at the entrance of the lane.

I then was proceeding to our troops to give information, when I met the president, general Armstrong, colonel Monroe, and Mr. Rush, the attorney general, considerably in advance of all our troops, going immediately into Bladensburg. I observed on meeting them, Mr. Madison, the enemy are now in Bladensburg; he exclaimed with surprise, the enemy in Bladensburg! and at the same moment they all turned their horses and rode towards our troops with considerable speed. I called

out aloud, Mr. Madison, if you will stop I will show them to you, they are now in sight; he paid no attention, they all rode off very fast except Mr. Rush, who halted, and I observed to him that there are a part of the enemy stopping at that lane; he said, that cannot be the enemy, they are not in uniform; I told him that they were a part of the advance party, that the others had gone up the lane, and that not any of them were in uniform. At this moment the redcoats began to heave in sight in two sections, some in the rear and others in the front of Lownd's house, and were forming in the Annapolis road; Mr. Rush, on seeing them, observed, I am satisfied; and turned his horse very suddenly to ride away, when his hat fell off, and he rode some distance without it, when I called out to him, Mr. Rush, come back and take up your hat, which he did, and then pursued his company with all speed. Our troops, before I could get up to them, began to fire from the left of the line with cannon and small arms, into the town of Bladensburg. I supposed at the time, it was from the information communicated by Mr. Madison from me, as I was the last person from Bladensburg. I immediately rode up the hill, expecting to find some of the heads of departments, to endeavor to get them to stop the firing till it could be more effectual. I could not see the president or any of the gentlemen that was with him, when I gave him the information. But I observed general Winder in the rear of the line, who I found to be the commanding officer. I immediately addressed him, and informed him that I was just from Bladensburg, and that there was but a very small party of the enemy in the town, that they had commenced firing too early, and that if they would reserve their fire for a few minutes,

the British troops was then coming down the hill and was about to form on the Annapolis road, when they would be able to do some execution, for they were then heaving their fire away. I found that general Winder appeared to pay but little attention to what I had said. I remained upon the battle ground for some time, and until the retreat was ordered, and every thing and every body, appeared to be in the greatest confusion, no point fixed for rallying, or bringing the enemy to action, and the greater part of our troops were retreating in the greatest disorder. I returned to the city, and stopped at the president's house, which I found entirely abandoned, excepting one white servant, who informed me that the president had returned from the battle ground, and that he had gone out of the city. I observed at the president's door two pieces of cannon, well mounted on travelling carriages, which had been fixed there for the defence of the house under a guard of soldiers for some time, which was also abandoned. This being late in the day, and the most of the retreating soldiers having passed by, there was, however, still some coming on very much fatigued, and worn down with hunger and thirst, I stopped a number of them, and plied them with plenty of brandy, which I got the president's servant to bring forward from the house. I then prevailed upon the soldiery to remove the cannon by hand towards Georgetown, where they were saved from falling into the hands of the enemy, who took possession of the house soon after. This now being near night, and not seeing a single military man in the city, I retired a few miles in the country, where I soon was a spectator to the conflagration of the capitol, president's house, &c.

I remained in the vicinity of the city until after the enemy had abandoned it, when I returned; and in a day or two after, when stopping at the door of colonel Monroe, who was present, as well as Mr. Madison, Mr. Rush, and several other gentlemen, Mr. Rush observed to me, sir, we consider ourselves under obligations to you for preventing our falling into the hands of the enemy at Bladensburg; observing, at the same time, that they were going immediately into Bladensburg, understanding that part of general Winder's troops were there, and that they should have supposed the advance part of the enemy, not in uniform, were a part of general Winder's troops. The foregoing is as correct a narrative of facts as I can at this time recollect.

I am, sir, with great respect, &c.

WM. SIMMONS.

The hon. R. M. Johnson, &c.

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENT.

[Received by the printer, after the other documents were printed.]

Georgetown, December 16, 1814.

SIR—I had the honor to receive yours of yesterday. My statement shall be concise as possible. On perusing, in the National Intelligencer of the 10th instant, the report of the committee of which you are the chairman, the following passage arrested my attention: “From early in the morning till late in the afternoon, colonel Minor sought colonel Carberry diligently, but he could not be found. He rode to headquarters and obtained an order from general Winder upon the arsenal for arms, &c.—marched to the place with his regiment. Colonel Carberry arrived at the moment, and apologized for his absence, and informed colonel Minor that he had, the evening before, ridden out to his country seat.”

Without adverting to the information on which the committee may have thought proper to rely, for what is stated in the above extract, I shall merely proceed to state some facts, supported by respectable testimony, which, it is believed, will, in the opinion of the committee, completely invalidate what is there set forth.

1. It will appear that on the night of the 23d of August, between the hours of nine and eleven, I was seen between capitol hill and the camp. See the certificate of major Marsteller, D. Q. M. G. No. 1. That late at night of the 23d, I arrived at Mr. Semmes’ hotel, in Georgetown; that I lodged there that night; was seen about sunrise

next morning, near M'Leod's hotel, on the Pennsylvania avenue; and that afterwards I returned to my quarters in Georgetown and breakfasted. See Nos. 3 and 4, given by Mr. Semmes, my landlord, and captain Cassin, of the district militia. That on the morning of 24th August, between seven and nine, I signed requisitions for arms, &c. for colonel Minor, and gave them to the surgeon of his regiment. See lieutenant Hobbs', No. 2. That doctor Jones, who was with our troops when the action commenced, returning to his hospital to attend to his duties there, saw colonel Minor's troops halted on capitol hill, and thinks they were getting their dinners. See his certificate, No. 5. That in the opinion of lieutenant Baden, of the ordnance department, colonel Minor's troops, from the time they arrived at the arsenal, had sufficient time to have got their arms, &c. and have marched to the battle ground before the action commenced. See his certificate, No. 6.

These certificates being in your hands, can easily be referred to.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect, sir,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY CARBERRY,

Colonel 36th U. S. infantry.

The honorable Richard M. Johnson,
chairman of a committee of congress.

